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JESUS AND ART

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BY

JAMES ROBERTSON CAMERON

M.A., D.Phil.

AUTHOR OF "THE RENASCENCE OF JESUS," ETC.

LONDON

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Printed in Great Britain

TO MY BROTHER

PREFACE

An effort is made in this book to prove that Jesus Christ, by virtue of His personality, His teaching, and achievement, and His whole finished work, has brought a new ideal into Art as into Religion, and the greatest stimulus or uplift which it has ever received. It is not meant that Jesus discussed Art or said anything specially about Art itself, but only that in His habitual way of saying and doing things He used His imagination, giving to His language a beauty of its own, and to His actions a fullness and finish of their own, such as we do not find elsewhere. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." The word "finished" may be used to suggest that His touch was a finishing-touch, lifting all He said and did and desired into the region of the ideal, which is the only real, and which Art, no less than Religion, strives to reach. Art and Religion are not apart but minister to each other, and the aim

of these pages is to recover the unity which has often been broken, and is still broken, with loss to both.

Art is an outstanding witness to the grace and truth of our Lord, and its witness, if it were but seriously considered, would yield a powerful apologetic, in these days, for the reality and sufficiency of the Christian gospel. Although much of this apologetic is omitted here, enough, it is hoped, is furnished to show that Art has crowned the Christ with many crowns, and that such is the deeper beauty which He has breathed into nature and life, that Art will never cease to wonder and adore.

When we remember the great cathedrals which have been raised in homage to Christ, when we think e.g., of the lovely parish-churches of England, of the sculptures and vessels of the sanctuary, their crosses and crucifixes, and of their pictures wrought out with the feeling of hearts and the passion of souls that gloried in His service, we find that Art is a signal missionary of Christ. We cannot, therefore, neglect Art, but seek to bring it more and more into the

activities of the Church to-day, rendering the Church far more worthy than it is of Christ, and more fitted to call out the worship, the wonder, the adoration of Him Who founded it with His blood and tears—Him Who is God manifest in the flesh.

J.R.C.

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JESUS AND ART

CHAPTER I

ART, RELIGION, LIFE

"THE Church and Art," or rather "Jesus and Art," which is the theme of the following pages, is but a part, although a very special part, of the larger theme of Religion and Art. The latter is so large, it includes so much of what is most of value in the story of mankind, that it would take a series of volumes similar to this one to set it down in words. And as for the former, even it is so rich and varied in itself that many of its aspects will be little more than mentioned owing to the limits of the present sketch.

Since there is the need of some setting or background for the lesser theme, it may be pointed out here to begin with as regards the larger that Art no less than Religion is rooted and grounded in life. Art is a living thing, always in a sense

the same, yet always different as the inquiring and aspiring soul of man pursues its quest of beauty. We say quest of beauty so far as it is a quest. But beauty, like truth and goodness, is more than a quest, and in pursuing it age after age the spirit of man is bent upon something more than that. For it is not always seeking without finding. It is not always

"Moving about in worlds not realized."

For ever haunted but never homing. For ever feeling after and falling back on broken wing before something that for ever foils its grasp. Beauty is no mere elusive power drawing aside the veil for a moment here and there only to hide itself again in darkness. Beauty rather is the light with which reality covers itself as with a mantle. It is the brightness of the Countenance Divine lifted up to the wondering gaze of the human. It is all of one with that smile which Leonardo sought and found at last, and which plays over the face of the Mona Lisa—a smile full of meaning and mystery alike, "the smile of inward happiness, the enchanting power of the soul." Art, as one may put it, is just the capture

of that smile incarnate in the life of things. It is the empassioned response of the human soul to the self-revealing glory of the universe.

Art, accordingly, is no mere attempt to follow wandering fires. It is no mere futile quest of what is past its finding out. Art keeps no tryst and has no traffic with the unknowable. Its adventure is for no mere peradventure. Achievement rather than failure, affirmation and not negation is the message of its life. By the vision splendid it is on its way attended, but the vision does not die away

"And fade into the light of common day."

For where there is no vision there is no Art.

It follows, then, that Art springs from the same depths within the soul as Religion; and these twain, Religion and Art, are witnesses singly and together of the one Reality which reveals itself alike as Truth and Beauty and whose inspiration gives the understanding, wonder, power which pass now into things of finished form, and now into thoughts finely or fitly expressed, and now into works of faith and labours of love. "What I mean by Faith," St. James seems to say

in a famous passage—"is—is everything. That, too, is what I mean by Art—everything that was ever rightly done or made. By Art we live and move and have our being. Art is cleanliness, tidiness, order, gaiety, serenity, mastery, the right way of doing right things. Beauty is the 'substance' of things done, as faith is the substance of things hoped for."

A right thing rightly wrought into line or colour or sound is thus as real a proof of the Spirit as a psalm and a prayer, and a deed that is nobly performed. For these are all, after their own fashion, the answers of the human to the approach and the appeal of the Divine. The fact upon which the universe turns is not so much the soul of man seeking God as the Spirit of God seeking man and finding him now in his delight in Beauty, and now in his discovery of Truth, and now in his devotion to the Good. The Divine, as one may venture to express it, makes room for one and all of these activities, so different and yet akin, by which the human, sought and found of the Divine, closes with the Divine, at once losing and saving its life therein.

"There are gifts each from each distinct but the same Spirit : modes of service each from each distinct, and the Master served the same ; manifestations of energy each from each distinct, and the same God sole source of all energy whatsoever in whomsoever manifested. None but has the opportunity offered him for revealing the Spirit for a beneficent end. . . . Yet all these activities are manifestations of the same Spirit Who as He wills apportions them severally to sundry men."

Following up the apostle's line of thought, one may say that Art is as truly a manifestation of the same Spirit as Religion, each from each distinct, yet each to each related or akin, and capable, therefore, of contributing to the other and to the Spirit Himself. And if they are kindred activities they are also in a real sense creative. Granted that the one Spirit "spreads undivided, operates unspent" in them both, then in these intimate activities, Art and Religion, man is not merely receptive, but productive. To say that Art is the empassioned response of the soul to the beauty of the world is to say much but not

enough. Like Religion it is more than a response as it is more than a quest. Is it not an actual entry into, and appropriation of, the Elemental Life which robes Itself in beauty? For Art in its most vital periods, at least, is never merely imitation or transcription or the like, but the genesis of forms which are beautiful because they are instinct and at one with "the Soul of all the worlds." If we ask why a certain vase is beautiful or a certain statue, picture, melody, the answer surely is that there is something in its structure, colour, rhythm, which catches the Spirit and suggests the beauty of the whole. It is the loveliness of the whole becoming form in and through the vision and achievement of the artist. Now that does imply intense responsiveness, a sensibility most delicate and sure on the part of the artist, but more also, it implies that he has become so much at home with beauty that it is no longer without but within him.

"It is no longer I that live, but beauty liveth in me."

To him, as Wordsworth "dares to hope" in the *Prelude*:

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A privilege whereby a work of his,
Proceeding from a source of untaught things
Creative and enduring, may become
A power like one of Nature's."

Only thus, too, as we venture to think, may we ever hope to appraise such master-lights of beauty as certain sculptures hailing from ancient Greece, and certain vases, landscapes, birds and flowers from China and the East of long-ago, and the Gothic arch, the marbles of Michelangelo and Donatello, the paintings of the Renaissance in Italy, and the works of Rembrandt and Turner, of Bach and Beethoven. For these things are no mere broken lights along the path of some forlorn quest, no mere pale reflections of the half-revealed and half-concealed perfection of the world. They are the living Spirit of beauty breaking into fresh and fruitful form in and through the creative or imaginative thought of men. Beauty, like wisdom, is justified by all her children. The works of their hands are all the more the works of the Spirit because they are the works of the children. When Jesus said : "As

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my Father has continued working to this very moment, so I work too," He affirmed the continuity of His own and His Father's work. And may we not say that there is a like continuity betwixt the activities of the craftsmen and the Spirit of beauty by whom they are possessed? Their work is both their own and the work of the One inseparable Spirit, and all the more His that it is theirs.

> " They from their native selves can send abroad
> Kindred mutations; for themselves create
> A like existence; and whene'er it dawns
> Created for them, catch it, or are caught
> By its inevitable mastery,
> Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
> Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres."

" Such minds," as Wordsworth adds, " are truly from the Deity, for they are Powers."

Now if this is all true, it is evident that Art, no less than Religion, is a creative activity both of the Divine and, in the sense explained, of the human. Like Religion and with the same insistence as Religion, Art when it is at " the top of its bent " demands the single eye, simplicity, sincerity, or purity of heart. It requires the

plucking out of the "lie in the soul" so that the soul being loosed from the false assertiveness of self may be free to wonder and to work continuously within the light of life. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" thus holds as true in the realm of Art as in that of Religion. The sight of the eye depends upon the insight of the soul.

Let it be understood, then, that Art, equally with Religion, belongs to the core of our divine-human life, and is essential to its growth and to its full expansion and expression. Hence it can be just as little slighted or ignored as Religion, it can be just as little treated as a pastime proper to an idle hour, or when the serious business of the day is done. And yet it is the case that to multitudes within the Church and out of it Art is but a form of entertainment, one of the pleasures of life, not one of its necessities, without any vital part in education or in worship or in work, the absence or presence of which is after all a thing of naught. Suffice it here to say that this, a popular view of Art, is a gross injustice to the masters, and it only requires a little knowledge of

their history, and the contribution they have made to their own and every age to see that by treating Art as but a plaything and by the way, we are doing wrong to truth as well as to beauty, and that in so far as we deprive our schools and colleges, our workshops and our churches of the freedom and the discipline of Art we are depriving them of one of those supreme activities girt about with joy which lift the human into touch with the Divine.

If it were within the compass of this book, one might proceed to illustrate what has now been said about the close relationship of Art and life by examples from the fascinating story of past and present times, and one might start with that original phase in which for long ages Art and magic, "the science of primitive man," went hand in hand covering the walls of caverns and even their dark interiors, and rock surfaces and other places with drawings and paintings, carvings of the creatures, the totems, it is supposed, of various tribes upon which these tribes depended for their food and fortune ; and then one might show how in China, e.g., the earliest paintings

were bound up with the prevailing forms of thought and of belief until in the fifth century Buddhism swept across the land bringing with it the Buddhist Art of India and Turkestan, which when it mingled with the native-born, produced the wonderful Art of the T'ang and Sung dynasties, and then again in Egypt, Crete, and Greece, and other parts as well, one might point to many another witness of the same truth, a truth which nowhere, it would seem, has left itself without a witness.

And, lastly, coming down to the present age, one might find among our own Pre-Raphaelites, to go no farther afield, that Art so far from being an extravagance hanging loosely to the business of life is an indispensable mode of defining and diffusing the prime ideals of the soul. Men by no means absorbed in themselves, aloof from others, the Pre-Raphaelites were the children of their age, born of that same authentic movement of the Spirit as issued in the poetry of Keats and Wordsworth and in so much besides. It is enough here to say that the outstanding single achievement of this group of artists is Millais' master-

piece, " Christ in the house of His parents," which marks an era, as it has been said, in native art. It is touched with much of the refinement and intellectual and spiritual life of Victorian days. At the same time it holds a depth of meaning, which combined with its qualities of mastership so choice and rare sets it in a place apart ; and it breathes that exquisite beauty from which strangeness is never absent. That is why it grips the heart as an admirer once confessed : " What flash of penetrating genius lit up the head and heart of the young Millais, and led to this creation at once infinitely tender and poignant, touching the deepest chords of our common humanity ever compassed about with beauty and sorrow ? "

I have referred to this picture of almost our own time because it is not only a crowning illustration of the truth of the unity of Art and life, but may serve to bring this brief discussion of it to a close. For with the naming of the name of Christ we come face to face with that creative and inspiring power, as of the dayspring from on high, which has descended alike upon Art and life and borne them into realms of truth and beauty un-

known to the ancients. If it is a deeper truth which distinguishes the pagan and the Christian eras it is also a deeper beauty. The attractive question has been asked, how is it that while sculpture was the characteristic fine art of antiquity, painting became the corresponding fine art of the moderns? And the answer is, as many have tried to define it, that painting had to give expression to the thoughts evoked by Christianity, and to a class of emotions of which antiquity was unaware. Great as the Greeks, those masters of sculpture, were, "they had no experience of the mental maladies, the tortures of remorse, or the whole inner life created by Christianity." "For them," in the words of a discerning writer, "the whole creation was not groaning and travailing in pain. They were waiting for no glory to be revealed, with which the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared. The glory was already present to their eyes: flesh and blood for them did, or might, already in this terrestrial world possess the Kingdom of God. They could live with satisfaction in the present, and forgo the necessity of a redemption to come. But abolish

the unseen world for the Christian and the whole meaning and value of life is altered." Hence a new Art, or mode of Art, was needed to represent the new life which had found in this unseen world a world of its own, and could not live without the sense or sight of it.

Sculpture exactly suited as well as served the ideas and ideals of Greek thought. It was peculiarly adapted to a people whose creed centred in the saying, " Man is the measure of all things," and who worshipped physical perfection as the pitch and acme of the human and Divine. One has only to compare the sculpture of Greece with that of Michelangelo, to find that the latter is charged with thoughts and emotions which far exceed the reach of the former—consummate as it is within its reach—and which while receiving such an eloquence and depth of form from the mastery of his touch were already feeling out towards a subtler and a more sufficient medium of expression. It is not so much that sculpture fails in his hands as that it does not suffice, just as one word may not suffice and may need another to unfold the fuller meaning of a truth profoundly

felt. The Pieta in St. Peter's at Rome, and the Pieta in the Duomo of Florence, both by Michelangelo, are works of such strength combined with tenderness and grace, that one may doubt whether they could have been surpassed if wrought in any other fashion than their own.

And yet, as Leonardo pointed out, "painting is adorned with infinite possibilities of which sculpture can make no use." The new world of ideas introduced by Christianity, its interests, motives, mysteries fraught with the Spirit of an endless life, required a more flexible and finer medium of expression, and this emerged in the art of painting, which with colour to use and almost boundless shades and harmonies of colour was more fitted for the task before it. Not that even it was wholly fit. Perhaps no medium such as marble, colour, sound or speech is, or ever will be; but judging by its fruits, painting went beyond sculpture in dealing with its vast and vital theme. How it did deal with it, how grandly, how nobly, the churches and galleries of Italy, with their madonnas, saints and angels, and their scenes from the life-story of our Lord, are a true witness.

There has never been such an outburst of pictorial art as in the Italy of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries.

In this instance, once again, Art proclaims its unity with life. For it arose to supply the new-born life of the time with a fitting organ of expression. It was towards the close of the thirteenth century that the revival swept over Italy enkindling ideals and emotions which could not be content with the rigid and now exhausted forms of Byzantine traditions, "New wine must be put into fresh wine-skins." The prime agent of the Renaissance in Italy was St. Francis of Assisi. If "'tis always morning somewhere in the world," it was morning there when he began to preach. In his person, as in his preaching, he restored the primitive simplicity of the Gospel, he revived the love which is the soul of the Christian life. He saved Christianity by setting it free from the oldness of the letter, and by setting it forth in the newness of the Spirit he made it alive and aglow once more in the lives of men. "I, Brother Francis, the least of your servants, pray and conjure you by that love which is God

Himself, willing to throw myself at your feet and kiss them, to receive with humility and love these words and all others of our Lord Jesus Christ, to put them to profit and carry them out."

In three directions the life and teaching of St. Francis slowly but surely renewed the face of Art, and it became a new creation. First of all, the new Gospel which was but, in a sense, the old re-born, brought together again the Divine and the human which had now for a long time been severely held apart, and by divesting the Divine of its remoteness and gloom, invested it with grace and something akin and kindly to the human. Then it breathed the air of a new relationship into the austere image of the Virgin Mother and her Child, so that it came into the range of life and caught the beauty of a smile. "The head that was wont to stare fixedly upon the child began to bend in the gentle act of love, and as though conquered by tenderness, bowed itself upon the smaller head." And lastly it reconciled God and nature, inviting men in the music of the 'Canticle of the Sun' to praise Him with all His creatures. And thus instead of the gold back-

ground which had long served to isolate the sacred figures from all that is earthly, the landscape began to appear with hedgerows and flowers and gardens, where birds sing and the animals live in peace with the saints. That the old had gone and the new had come in life as in Art is shown above all by the feeling of elation, or rather, even of ecstasy which arose in room of the past solemnity.

Although it is not possible, it would seem, to accept Vasari's famous story as it stands, yet it may perhaps be worth recalling as an index of the spirit which now prevailed. The story is that while Cimabue was painting the Madonna for the chapel of the Rucellai family in Santa Maria Novella at Florence, King Charles of Anjou passed through the city, and the magistrates conducted him to see the picture. When this work was shown to the king it had not yet been seen by anyone, so all the men and women in Florence hastened in crowds to see it with the greatest demonstrations of joy, and forming a procession, bore it in triumph from the master's house to the church. This has been described as " the birth-

day festival of nothing less than what the world now values as Italian painting."

But another incident is even more suggestive of a beginning of days. For it is told that Cimabue, then at the height of his fame, chanced to find the child Giotto among the sheepfolds in the Tuscan valley, trying to draw the outline of one of his flock upon the surface of a stone. Recognizing the genius there already in his boyish sketch, the genius that was calling "the future from its cradle," he took him to his own studio and by-and-by Giotto became a greater master than his master, approaching the deep things of the Christian faith and the story of St. Francis with a freshness of spirit and the bright imaginative power which could make them real as life itself, and such as the poor laity of love could read in language open to their sight.

St. Francis died in 1226, Cimabue was born in 1240 and Giotto in 1276, and with these dates and these doers, there began a long and dazzling succession of painters and sculptors, too, which culminated in the golden age of Leonardo, Raphael and Michelangelo, the last of whom

perpetually brooding and almost breaking his passionate heart over the sermons of Savonarola, the poems of Dante, and the text of the Bible, prepared himself in solitude to body forth that prophecy upon the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at Rome, which has been hailed as "the weightiest prophecy the world has ever seen expressed in plastic form." "His theme is nothing less than the burden of the prophets and the sibyls who preached the coming of a light upon the world, and the condemnation of the world which had rejected it by an inexorable judge." Michelangelo is a figure which belongs to history no less than to Art, wielding as he ever did his mighty brush and chisel, to reveal the depths of what he thought and felt about the world in which he lived. As Symonds says: "Between the birth of the free spirit in Greece and its second birth in Italy, between Phidias and Michelangelo there yawned a sepulchre wherein the old faiths of the world lay buried, and whence Christ had risen." It is not too much to say that the sunny and attractive Francis at the beginning, and the fiery and secluded prophet-painter towards the end of

the most creative period in the art of painting, each of them together with every one of the long rôle of masters in between found the beauty which is truth, and the truth which is beauty, in the face and form of Christ. No age presents a better illustration of the fact that Art is bound up indivisibly with life, with Him, too, in Whom was life, and the life was the light of men.

As an indication of their attitude to Christ, one may point to a passage about the Last Supper, the masterpiece of Leonardo, in which Vasari relates that the painter left the head of Christ unfinished, because he did not venture to render the heavenly divinity which ought to mark the portrait of Christ. And the painter Lomazzo was told by contemporaries of the master that he used to tremble with agitation when he worked at the head of Christ. But of all the masters, whether belonging to Italy or to other lands, it was Rembrandt, as it may be noted here, who gave the whole depth and daring of his genius to the task of representing Christ. Thus to study his etched work only is but to follow in picture the footsteps of our Lord in the days of His flesh. And

as for his paintings, if one looks into the matchless face of the " Christ at Emmaus," or into that of the father in the " Return of the Prodigal," to take but these two, one will receive an impression of the open secret of the Gospel such as it is impossible to obtain in literature or anywhere else indeed, save only, perchance, in the passion-music of Johann Sebastian Bach, and in the ninth symphony and the last string quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven.

For not content with the speaking instrument of colour, Art pressed on at the call of life and under the spell of Christ, and brought forth yet another, even " more moving-delicate " and full of grace, the voice of music, to tell out both the joy and sorrow, the faith and rapture, of the soul. " A *musical* thought is one spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing ; detected the inmost mystery of it, namely the *melody* that lies hidden in it ; the inward harmony of coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists, and has a right to be, here in this world. All inmost things, we may say, are melodious ; naturally utter themselves in

song." Just as they began to utter themselves in colour in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they uttered themselves in song. And ever since then music has been inseparate, an angel of the Presence, so to speak, at once the seer and the singer of the inmost things.

Two facts may be mentioned here by way of illustration. The first is that the name "Jesus" had a strange personal fascination for Bach, and every melody that relates to Jesus is touched with a feeling of tenderness and love; it breathes the air of intimacy reverent and adoring which was characteristic of his attitude in life and Art alike. And the second is that Beethoven in his last and crowning symphony bequeathed to humanity an "Ode to Joy," summoning it to praise God for the good things of life. It is only when one remembers that Beethoven suffered as but few have suffered that one can appreciate the greatness of the light which had risen upon him. Perhaps only Rembrandt or Michelangelo trod the winepress in such anguish of soul. But each

caught the gleam of dayspring in the dark, and came to the brightness of its rising. Thus the ninth symphony may be said to be the climax, or a part of the climax, of Beethoven's attitude to things. The note of strife is in it, and a nameless pain as of one who has felt the bruise and bitterness of circumstance, but soaring through and above it is the other note of trust and exaltation as of one who has found that evil can be overcome of good, and that even the worst can be made to magnify the best. No one will deny that that proclaims the master's insight into and oneness with the spirit of life in Christ. It would not be fancy but fact to say that Beethoven and Rembrandt are supreme interpreters—one would be prepared to say, if one might add Wordsworth, the supreme interpreters in our modern time—of the something far more deeply interfused, which is the grace as well as the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence it is true to say that "the Christ more than any Greek god or all the gods of Greece has inspired and drawn around Him the arts of the modern world." Even although it is as yet too

little recognized how profoundly the Christ by entering into the life of men entered into the arts, and enlarged their borders, and imbued them with a spirit which mingled with and magnified their own. A creative spirit increasing the reach of their achievement as it increased the range of their sensibility. It still awaits to be shown on a large scale how much the Christ has contributed to the arts, and how much in turn the arts have contributed towards a right appreciation of Him. Their contribution indeed is so great that one cannot think that theology will ever of itself arrive at an adequate creed or concept of the Christ without the illumination of the arts. Not one of them but has paid its tribute, not one but has borne its witness to the Christ or to what is the same thing, the witness borne by Him, which, if it be the spirit of all prophecy, is no less the spirit of all Art. Thus Art may be a mighty apologetic although it is scarcely, if ever, used as such.

Of the witness of Jesus one may say, using the words of Schiller in another connection, that it " widened nature without going beyond it " ; it

brought to light the ideal which is there in nature for our eyes to see, if they can only look long and deep enough. By flashing into view its luminous background, so to speak, it added a new province to nature, continuous, and of a piece with it; without which nature is not what it is ideally or really, and without which life as a whole is not what it is ideally or really. In this sense the witness of Jesus is a product of the same imagination, the same "glorious faculty," which is found in higher minds and especially in the masters of the arts and

> "Which in truth
> Is but another name for absolute power,
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood."

It is reason pressing home to the universal or the whole within the parts, to the inward in the outward, to the unity which restores the broken harmony of things. "For contradiction, division, external limitation are the prose of life; and Art is Art, poetry is poetry only as it disentangles, unites and reconciles, giving us if not the open vision, at least the presentiment or 'ahnung' of the unity which is beneath and beyond it."

It will be our aim in the next chapter to show that the witness of Jesus has given not merely a presentiment but something also of the open vision of the unity in which Art and Religion have their being, and are bound together as members one of another. All great Art, like all true Religion, is praise.

CHAPTER II

JESUS AND ART

PART I

LOWELL in one of his poems tells the tale of a prophet who, feeling that God had forsaken him, set out for a certain holy hill in the belief that there if anywhere upon earth His presence still lingered, and on the hillside he prayed for a sign and listened for an answer to his prayer. But there was no burst of thunder, and not even a murmur stirred the air. Only the tuft of moss before him opened, and a tender violet appeared; and at the sight of it he remembered that ere he entered on his journey his child had run to him, holding in her hand a flower just like this, which she had plucked beside his very door. He had no need, therefore, to fare away to a far-off holy hill to see the homely flower, or to seek the Presence whose glory stood over the threshold.

The prophet had fallen into the ancient error of thinking that in order to believe in God he must

needs see signs and wonders and come before His presence in some specially appointed meeting-place apart. If he had only trusted in his nature, as the poet says, and learned to look for God in the things of home and at hand, he would have seen that God is revealed in the known and not hidden in the unknown, and is to be found of all them that seek Him where they are.

Now it is a signal part of the witness of Jesus, meaning by witness not merely His few reported sayings but His whole attitude in silence as well as in speech, in life as well as in teaching, that God is such that He is to be found and known not through any vastness or through any vacancy spread betwixt Himself and the soul of man, but in and through all things that move the soul to love. Jesus looked with the same eye upon nature as upon humanity, the eye with the long deep gaze in it before which nature could not but unfold like a flower before the sun, the eye of the heart

"That watches and receives."

Amid the labours of His life it was His wont to turn aside and look upon nature not as a pilgrim

only, or a passing guest, but as one at home in the meadows and among the mountains and there where the silences and far horizons could be deeply felt and could feed " the happy stillness of the mind." Hence it was not merely out of the midst of a single bush that burned with fire upon a sacred mount apart that Jesus caught the vision of His God, but in the common flowers of the field, and in the fowls of the air, and even in the sparrow falling to the ground.

One of the marked features of His personality and one peculiarly His own when He steps upon the stage of history is His ingrained habit of going away into desert places and to the heights of mountains.

" How use doth breed a habit in a man."

Thus He is no sooner baptized and conscious of His task than He is led up of the Spirit into the desert that there in the solitude and space He might think out the mighty apocalypse which had rent the heavens and revealed Him to Himself: and scarcely has He begun to preach and to heal and to cast out demons before it is recorded that " in the morning, a great

while before day, He rose up, and went out and departed to a desert place"; and again, so rapid is His early fame, and the popular excitement so intense that He must needs escape from it all for the time being : " He could no longer openly enter a town, but stayed in the country, in desert places." And on a later occasion, under the stress of a similar necessity, He says to His disciples: " Come you yourselves apart to some desert spot, and rest a little while." In every case, as it will be observed, it was an inner need or purpose which impelled Him to withdraw at the bidding of a spirit which craved the solitudes of nature almost as it craved the souls of men. May we not recall in this connection what Wordsworth says of Nature:

> " A Power
> That is the visible quality and shape,
> And image of right reason ; that matures
> Her processes by steadfast laws ;
> trains
> To meekness and exalts by humble faith ;
> Holds up before the mind intoxicate
> With present objects, and the busy dance
> Of things that pass away, a temperate show
> Of objects that endure."

Mark and Luke both relate that He "there prayed." Sometimes, worn in body, and sometimes disquieted in soul, it was His to regain the power which had passed from Him, and to receive

> "Authentic tidings of invisible things,
> And central peace subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation."

And, frequently, for the same besetting need or purpose of the spirit "He goeth up into the mountain." Luke mentions that He went out into the mountain to pray, and "He continued all night in prayer to God." That was just before the choosing of the Twelve, and it would seem that either before or after some such decisive moment of His ministry, Jesus was in the practice of taking to the heights. "Great things are done when men and mountains meet," says Blake, and nowhere is the truth of that so evident as in the life before us. The mountains, like the wilderness, were no small factor in His growth as in the ripe product of His grace and truth.

Thus it is profoundly significant in this connection to find it stated—by Luke alone—that

at the close of His career, "during the days He was teaching in the temple; but during the nights leaving (the temple) He used to go and lodge on the hill."

Wordsworth says that the language of the hills,

> "Aids the thoughts,
> However multitudinous, to move
> With order and relation."

and of one, a herdsman, whom he knew, that

> "Early had he learned
> To reverence the volume that displays
> The mystery, the life which cannot die;
> But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith,
> All things responsive to the writing, there
> Breathed immortality, revolving life,
> And greatness still revolving; infinite;
> There littleness was not; the least of things
> Seemed infinite, and there his spirit shaped
> Her prospects, nor did he believe—he *saw*."

Now of Jesus, too, going out, as His custom was, to the mountains at times so fraught with destiny, may it not be said that there His spirit shaped her prospects, and He saw? Faith rose to the pitch or point of vision. And things, "all things," were revealed to Him of His Father, and power was with Him to reveal. Lesser

things as well as greater, the flowers arrayed in beauty at His feet, the fields white to harvest, the wild birds tended in their flight, and the sparrows unforgotten in their fall, such things as these no less than the "mysteries" of the kingdom and the spirits of the blest. There is no trace in Him as in so many of His followers of any hiding of His face from the life of nature for fear that its beauty, its wonder, or its power would steal away His heart from God. No one who tries to appreciate the witness of Jesus as a whole can charge Him with gloom or asceticism, or with a form of piety that moves men to forsake the body and flee from the dear life of earth. "I cannot read the New Testament," says Symonds, "the Imitatio Christi, the Confessions of St. Augustine, and the Pilgrim's Progress without feeling that Christianity in its origin, and as understood by its chief champions was, and is, ascetic."

Now it must be admitted that many of the followers of Christ, and even His chief champions, so to name them, have been ascetics, pursuing the narrow way as they perceived it, intent upon

an aspect of the truth, as if it were the whole, and often in their haste desiring naught except the fire from heaven which He Himself refused to bid. Consumed with their own zeal rather than with His, a zeal to destroy, they forgot to fulfil, thus wrongly dividing, or giving a wrong direction to, the word of truth, and meriting the rebuke of the early writer who describes them as "men who prohibited marriage and insisted on abstinence from foods, which God created for believing men who understand the truth to partake of with thanksgiving. For everything that God has created is good and nothing is to be refused so it be received with thanksgiving, for then it is consecrated through the word of God and through prayer."

This great utterance—even supposing Paul is not the author of it—is the utterance of a primitive Christian who was of the same mind as Paul and of the same mind as Jesus Himself. It were enough, perhaps, to recall a single passage like Mark vii. 19, "thus He pronounced all food clean." But there is more than a single passage or many passages, there is His whole

witness in silence as in speech, in practice as in preaching, in what lies in the background as well as in what appears in the foreground of His Gospel. For the word of truth as it flows in parable and precept from His anointed lips and from the deep breathings of His spirit covers and enshrines the whole of life without and within. Thus it is God who clothes the grass of the field and who makes the sun arise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. He is the Lord of heaven and of earth. Heaven is His throne and earth the footstool of His feet. An able writer has said that "almost all Christ's moral sayings might be paralleled or illustrated by something in Hebrew or Jewish literature. The praise of the beauty of flowers cannot apparently be so paralleled. Of all Christ's sayings it is the most original." "Consider" (Luke has "fix your mind upon") "the lilies of the field how they grow! They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you, even Solomon in all his splendour was never robed like one of these." "In the first century," as the same writer says,

" it must have seemed a paradox of paradoxes that the glory of Solomon's clothing is not so great as that of a flower." Even yet its " marvellous originality " is but little understood. The truth is that Christ was long before His time in this creative utterance, and it would be possible to show that it was only gradually, " here a little and there a little," that the arts began to catch up with His profoundly spiritual view of nature. A sense or sensibility like His, so fresh, spontaneous and deep, must have been in Him from His youth, and have grown with the vast conceptions and ideals which more and more became His own as He strove with them in lonely places and in watches of the night and day. And, perhaps, one might here suggest that a poem like " The Prelude of Wordsworth," with its finished picture of the growth of a soul through fellowship with nature, has that in it which may help one most of all to appreciate something of the inspiration and the discipline by which the Spirit of nature, manifestly an abiding power in Jesus' life, far more so even than in that of any Hebrew sage or poet, acted on His

soul and wrought in Him the passions which strengthen character, and the pieties which exalt it.

Jesus has often been presented as an enthusiast, almost indeed, as a fanatic concerned about the coming of the kingdom of heaven and about the last things, but little if at all about the present time and tide in the affairs of men. He was no reformer of society of the usual or even of the prophetic type. He made no attempt, for example, by agitation or revolt to change the form of government which hung like a millstone around the neck of His people. He moved in another plane of things, and, as one has said, "He roused a spirit which moved in another plane than that of resistance or submission to imperial power." But to say that Jesus was absorbed in a kingdom and a crisis that lay within the future, and within the sovereign will of God alone, and that His "ethics," is only a sort of code in keeping with the passing stage or interval preceding this event is strangely to overlook for one thing, and it is but one of many, those serene and songful words of which "consider the lilies"

is the chief, the keynote, as it were, of them all, which express His sheer delight in " the mighty world of eye and ear " and in the present personal reign of the Father, Lord of heaven and earth. As this is not the time or the place to discuss the difficult problem of the Kingdom it may be enough to say that no solution of it will be found by ignoring a group of sayings which forms such a vital and original part of the recorded thought of Christ. His thought is too free, imaginative, spiritual to be forced within the limits of a single doctrine of the future; and indeed it is far less His thought that is on trial now than the thought of those who try to interpret parts of it as if they were the whole, and who turn its flower of poetry into the dust of prose.

The truth is, and one may not forget it, that Jesus brought the poet's eye to nature, the poet's insight or his second sight, and what He saw He sang with the poet's truthfulness and charm of speech. Everywhere He touched things common till they rose to touch the spheres. He shot His teaching through with pictures drawn from the loveliness of a world whose life He loved

like His own in God. With a rare understanding He drew nature in and made it one of the strings of the instrument upon which He discoursed the music of the Gospel. And this was nature not only as a "realm of pleasance" close at hand with its dayspring and its rain, its seasons and their fruits and flowers, its trees and the birds lodging in the branches thereof, but also as a realm of solitude far withdrawn, of desert places and mountainous retreats: "Regions consecrate to oldest time!" It was with the same eye He looked upon the things beneath Him and looked up to the hills above Him. It was with the same mind "steeped in feeling" He went through the cornfields and resorted ofttimes to the wilderness. He was equally at home in the near and the far. Hence, surely, it was from no mere ascetic impulse that He betook Himself so often to the solitudes, like one content to live the silent life secluded and alone. The solitudes might be His favourite haunt of prayer, but prayer was a task to Him and a tryst as real and urgent as His preaching to the poor. The one was as much a choice

of His spirit as the other, and so, apparently, were the spots of earth appropriate to each. Both by speech and action, then, by His witness here "in the midst," and there "by Himself alone," Jesus shed upon nature a new light, full of warmth and colour, and such as has little in common with the pale and ghostly light of asceticism.

It would, indeed, be true to say that nature became a new world from the day that Jesus dwelt among its trodden and untrodden ways, and found it everywhere so friendly to His spirit, instinct with a life that mingled with His own, and that helped Him both to apprehend and body forth His thought of God. The tidings which it brought were all of one with the tidings which He came to proclaim. It was one of the "all things" handed over to Him by His Father to reveal. Its message, therefore, was a joyous message, like a repetition of the first creative word "it was very good."

How very good is shown by this, that in all that He beheld,

"From this green earth,"

in the seed growing up spontaneously, and in the blade and the ear and the full corn in the ear, in the bloom of the flower and the bounty round about the creatures, as well as in the ministries of sun and sea and those shrines among the hills, Jesus recognized and adored the same Spirit of beauty and beneficence Whose presence He cherished and confessed in the depths of His own soul. If He gazed upon the things He beheld with the long deep gaze of which He spoke, He reaped the harvest of it in that intense love, or, that open vision of the spiritual life of nature which was not only a foretaste of, but the active participation in the creative joy of the Father. And one of His ways of revealing to men the Father whom He knew was by teaching them to inquire of nature and by inquiring to admire, until the spiritual life within, the love and the loveliness alike, kindled in their hearts a kindred joy to His own. Only by fixing the mind, by gazing intently, by giving oneself up without thought of self to " watch and receive " is it possible for men to enter into and abide in Jesus' joyous experience. No one can be said

to " listen to His voice " unless he hears the ringing cry of joy in such words as these: " even Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these." " If God so clothes the grass which blooms in the field to-day, how much more shall He clothe you." " Not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge of your Father. Fear not, therefore, you are worth far more than sparrows."

There is a charm in these words, a glamour as of a newborn day upon the sea which recalls what Sir Philip Sidney says about the poet. " He beginneth not with obscure definitions which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of Music ; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner."

It is sometimes said that our Lord did not argue, but simply made assertions and left them to make their own impression on the mind. But

it is to be observed that there is a striking mode of argument which He was wont to use, and which nature in a sense supplied. Only one profoundly sympathetic to the spiritual life of nature could ever have made such use of it. From time to time in conversation and address He begins with some phase of truth upon the plane of nature open and familiar to His hearers, and from this being admitted, He proceeds to a higher phase which thus, by comparison, becomes intelligible and clear. On one occasion being asked, "is it right to heal on the Sabbath day?" He replied by asking a question which allowed of but one reply: "What man shall there be of you, that shall have one sheep, and if this fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?" And from this He passes to the truth which follows of necessity, "How much more is a man worth than a sheep. Thus it is right to do good on the Sabbath day."

And as He used this simple but conclusive form of thought to unfold His doctrine of the worth of man, and of man's relationship to man, so He applied it to express the truth about the

Father and His Fatherhood. "Look at the wild birds, they sow not, neither do they reap . . . and yet your Father feeds them. How much more will He feed you who are worth more than birds?" "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? Yet not even one of them is forgotten by God. Fear not, you are worth far more than sparrows." Look how the lilies grow, they neither toil nor spin, and yet what a glory is theirs, nay, look but at the common grass in the field, its texture like the lilies', finer far than any silken thread of man's device, its swift and fruitful growth across the naked soil until the soil is clothed with pastures green, and is meet for the various uses of man. "Now if God so clothes the grass in the field . . . will He not much more clothe you?" The argument is sound, it is lofty common sense, it is profound wisdom, part of the wisdom in which He grew through long communings with the life without him and within. And it is worth noting here that it is the same argument which men have adopted, and been driven to adopt, by reason or by faith or both, when they have turned now like Mungo Park

from the depths of woe, and now like Wordsworth from the heights of wonder and felt "A Presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts."

Mungo Park relates that on one occasion he considered his fate as certain, and that he had no alternative but to lie down and die. "At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small rose in fructification irresistibly caught my eye. Can that Being (thought I) Who planted, watered, and brought to perfection in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance look with unconcern upon the situation and sufferings of creatures formed after His own image? Reflections like these would not allow me to despair. I started up and disregarding both hunger and fatigue travelled forward assured that relief was at hand! And I was not disappointed."

The argument "how much more" is one of those lucid openings into the mind of Christ which disclose the order and direction of His thought, His way of thinking things together,

relating them to one another and to the unity within which they fall. The world in which He dwelt was not a world only visited at times, or haunted here and there by an elusive power, but was everywhere and at all times the abode of the one Father who is such that He adorns the flower and the field, and gives of His bounty to the creatures great and small, and reveals all this to "the babes." To Jesus moving about so freely, and without fear like a child in the home, God moved in no mysterious but ever in a luminous and friendly way His wonders to perform. Hence it would be a mistake from Jesus' point of view to think that God is present mainly in the unfamiliar and remote, in miracles and portents and rendings of the heavens, in secrets and in sources patent to the few. Since, in truth, there is not a spot of earth where the seed is sown and grows apace, or where the sparrow falls but is sacred to His Presence, and if only men have eyes to see and ears to hear, there is not a blade of grass but speaks the ancient oracle: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Thus by this homely but original mode of thought Jesus cleared away a mass of cloud and darkness from the face of God, and the problems of the wise and learned vanished in the visions of the simple-minded. Men have been wont to think of God as a God Who hides Himself, and have paid respect to priesthoods and the like who have sought His presence in sequestered shrines and in dim religious light. As if God does not clothe Himself with light as with a garment, and is not fain to reveal Himself, and as if God is not Love and must needs be loved and known. The truth is that men are upon a wrong track with their priesthoods and agnosticisms and their dark misgivings of His "divine simplicity." Whereas in going the way of Jesus' thought it is theirs to begin with the manifestations of God rather than His mysteries, and instead of peering here and there for glimpses of the vast enigma to catch the shining of His countenance in the beauty and bounty of the present world.

And what if there are tares among the wheat and thorns that choke the seed, and scorching

heat, and what if there are tempests beating down the houses built on sand, and falling towers that kill, and all the evils that afflict the bodies and the souls of men, and even if "an enemy hath done this," yet things innumerable as these, and Jesus did not fail to observe them, failed to disturb the order of His thought or break its inward harmony. Just because there was no unkindness in His heart and never a breath of malice or of hate, He refused to believe that this or that was any stain upon the radiance of His Father's love. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit from heaven to those who ask Him." Here is another instance of the kind of argument which Jesus used, and it opens up a further reach of truth.

He has been out among the fields gazing fondly on the handiwork of God, and now He goes into the homes of men to find the same substantial evidence of God therein. The home, no less than the flowering field, is all a witness to His Fatherhood. As before, He starts with

something open and familiar in order to present the truth as He beholds it. It is nothing distant or obscure, but simply the common lot of the ordinary household. And once again He shows that there is no impenetrable veil concealing the Divine, but that the elements of right thinking and true belief are close beside us, in our hands and homes. To Jesus heaven and home were always "kindred points." Here, then, is the home consisting of a small community closely knit together by the bond of love which is the bond that makes it possible. But the love is a many-coloured thing, and now its tone is tender and now severe. And whilst the nature of parental love is to give, yet its giving does not always answer to the wishes of the child, but rather to the deeper impulse which is fain to help and not to harm, and which would not give a stone for a loaf or a scorpion for a fish. Taking it all in all the home is where they know how to give what is good to their children. And thus if parents for all their evil are faithful to the soul of goodness in the home, does it not stand to reason, "how much more will your

Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him" ?

Now it was in this way all so simple and so sure that Jesus set free the significance of the home as He set free the significance of nature. As He widened nature without going beyond it, so He widened human nature without going beyond it. He made them both reveal the whole to which they belong. Or, in other words, He drew out their luminous background, and set them both upon it as the great poet or painter does in dealing with his theme. It is given to the seer,

> "To see the world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower;
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
> And eternity in an hour."

And Jesus, by virtue of the same expansion of sight, by insight, by imagination which is reason in her most exalted mood, caught up the facts or factors as a whole which make nature and human nature what they are, and seeing what he saw, he said what he said. His language is the language of vision even though at times it is cast in the form of argument.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND ART

PART II

Nothing was farther from the workings of His mind than the idea of "a Godless nature and an unnatural God," a mechanical world-order and an external world-architect, or world-governor who "lets the world swing round his finger." It was Jesus' great idea that nature in general, and human nature in particular is inseparably bound up with the Divine, and that neither the one nor the other can be seen or known save in the light that lighteth it. And it was this idea radiating through His personality that made it so many-sided, and at the same time so harmonious and one. It was the secret of His "sweet reasonableness"—that subtle virtue, as one has shown, which so pervaded all the strata of His being that "in Christ alone among men we have faith without dogmatism, enthusiasm without fanaticism, strength without violence, idealism without

visionariness, naturalness without materialism, freedom without licence, sacrifice without asceticism, purity without austerity, saintliness without morbidity, a light which was too strong to dazzle, a fire which was too intense to flame."

It is chiefly in His attitude to men, as one might expect, that this subtle virtue appears, rising to an appreciation of man byond even that of nature. Or, more truly, one might say that it is the same original attitude to nature carried to a farther point in keeping with the facts. For the appreciation of the one flows from the same source as the appreciation of the other, and follows the same new imaginative line, but in relation to humanity it touches a height of thought and action which stands by itself alone. Appreciation is the capacity to see and to say, and if it was such in Jesus that it lifted up the humblest of growing things in nature into a new and rare significance which it has taken a length of ages to perceive, disclosed the inner in the outer life, it accomplished as much and more as regards "the least of these His brethren." His principle is, as we have seen, that if God clothes the grass of the field, and

forgets not a single sparrow, He will much more clothe men and remember men since they are worth more than sparrows. It was always in the light of this his essential worth that Jesus regarded man and spoke and acted towards him. It is summed up in the one word : " For what could a man give in exchange for his soul ? " Hence He took and set man so instinct with soul in the midst of the minute and comprehensive care, or providence,

> " that knows no insulated spot,
> No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link
> It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds."

and bade him to be faithful in a very little and faithful also in much, and to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect.

Wordsworth in the Prelude, following closely the same line of imaginative thought, speaks of

> " that bursting forth
> Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,
> When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,
> And all the several frames of things, like stars,
> Through every magnitude distinguishable,
> Shone mutually indebted, or half lost
> Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy
> Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man

Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
As, of all visible natures, crown, though born
Of dust, and kindred to the worm ; a Being,
Both in perception and discernment, first
In every capability of rapture,
Through the divine effect of power and love ;
As more than anything we know, instinct
With godhead, and by reason, and by will,
Acknowledging dependency divine."

Now this new and lofty and unrivalled sense of the worth of man or what man has it in him to become (thus finely drawn out by one of the great interpreters of the mind of Jesus) underlay His every approach and appeal, and explains His dynamic influence, the faith, the hope, the love He evoked in men and still evokes. The Gospels form a kind of gallery of scenes, in the foreground of each of which stands Jesus face to face with one or other of those who have sought His presence, and now He looks upon and loves them, and now He knows their thoughts, and now He answers their spoken or unspoken need. Now He stands still at the voice of their cry, and now He takes them by the hand, or lays His hand upon them, and now He only says " with a word." Even His enemies are drawn to

exclaim "This man welcomes—or, is on the look-out for—sinners, and eats with them," bearing unwilling and unwitting witness to the truth. "A man to be greatly good," as Shelley says, "must imagine intensely and comprehensively, he must put himself in the place of another and of many others: the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination."

Of this power of imagination by which a man not only takes his stand beside another, but puts himself in his place, Jesus was possessed to a degree that is but seldom realized. It is like the emergence of a new thing in the life of humanity, as though it were a new organ added to the stock, or one long hidden brought to light! In any case it stood as far above the range of sympathy as genius stands above that of talent, or as creative Art above that of common sight and sense. And it was this great power that operated in His looking out for, or in His welcome to, sinners, and in His mission to the publicans, and in His self-identification with the "least" and with the "lost" among men. In a deeper sense,

it would seem, than St. Matthew takes the saying to mean, " Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses."

" Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! " was the enthusiastic greeting with which He received Nathanael, a greeting born of His insight both into " the man in every man," and the struggle in this man while under the fig tree, in which he had overcome the lower by the higher self, the Jacob by the Israel. And when the wonder of Nathanael and his homage were thus aroused, Jesus went on to expand His welcome to the one into a promise to the many. " *Thou* shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Ye* shall see heaven open wide, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Which was the vision Jesus beheld at His baptism, the light burning in His own soul and ready to be revealed to all His followers, enabling them to " see " their brethren and His.

There is another instance of this visionary power in the preceding passage, where it is told that " in the morning Andrew finds his brother

Simon. . . . He brought him to Jesus : Jesus gazed at him, and said, Thou art Simon, the son of John, thou shalt be called Cephas" (meaning "Peter" or "rock"). To the intent eye of Jesus searching and seeing him in the light of the open heaven, there appeared the promise of something stable like a rock in this child of the Galilean sea, something that bespoke the potential man of steadfast faith and fortitude in the actual man of shifting impulse and desire. A promise which was not belied. Now these reminiscences and others in the Gospel of St. John are all in accord with the portrait of Jesus unfolded in the earlier Gospels. To begin with, one may point to the Beatitudes, every one of which tells not only of the pursuit of a rare and lofty virtue possible to men, but of the prospect of a rare and lofty bliss, the bliss of sonship and the sight of God. And it is surely significant that Jesus no sooner began to preach than these ideal sayings burst like music from His lips. Hence it would be true to say, that the Beatitude strikes the keynote both of His Gospel and of His radiant life among men. For the same spirit which broke into such enraptured

language on the mount found expression again and again, as e.g., in His meeting with the paralytic, and with the Gentile centurion, with the Syro-Phenician woman, and with the woman in Simon's house of whom He spoke in words which will never pass away; "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? It is a beautiful thing she has done to Me." Nothing, indeed, is so characteristic of His speech and of His spirit as the Beatitude. It is the tone as well as the undertone of His whole being; His atmosphere, His accent and achievement all in one. Had there been but a single beatitude, a single moment of such lively joy as at the return of the seventy, one might have taken it to be but a passing transport, a fitful smile flitting across the face of a man of sorrows; but when this moment is only one of many, and the rule rather than the exception, one must needs perceive that here is something that is not passing but persistent, not casual but constant, the deep basal quality, the essence, the effulgence of His life.

For although His preaching began with the Beatitudes, the Beatitudes did not begin with

His preaching. The spirit that became articulate in them had already possessed Him at the Baptism, when as He prayed the heaven was opened, and a voice came out of heaven : " Thou art My beloved Son : in Thee I am well pleased." That voice and vision brought to light what had been hidden in the silent, unrecorded life at Nazareth. They summed up the earlier and began the later stage of His career. He had sowed to the Spirit then and there, and of the Spirit reaped the life which was now His destiny, and was now to be accomplished through His ministry. It was a life of the most intimate and intense communion with the Father, and when He began to speak to men He spoke from the heart of this communion, and, therefore, His words were full of the grace and truth of the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes were the song of His lips as they were the " supply " of His spirit to the end. It is impossible to appreciate the speech apart from the spirit, and the spirit of Jesus in His masterpiece, His finished work, His peerless contribution to the life and Art of the world.

Now it was the same spirit flowing spon-

taneously into the Beatitudes, and not only at the beginning of the ministry, but at signal moments in its course, that flowed no less spontaneously into the luminous image of the bridegroom by which Jesus let it be known that He was

"Happy as a lover,"

and that His disciples were taking part with Him in a bridal feast. They could not, therefore, be expected to fast or to express the joy of freedom in their life in forms which were not suitable to it. Tradition cannot walk with truth except they have agreed. "Fresh wine must be put into new wineskins." Whether the image belongs to the earlier or to a later stage, as some suppose, it surely belongs to the same world of thought and things as the Baptism and the Beatitudes and the whole position as between Jesus and the Baptist. For while Jesus was closely drawn to John He was just as widely parted from him by virtue of the Spirit which abode upon Him. Using a distinction which Paul has finely put one might say that while the one lived and taught and wrought in the spirit of "the order that now passes away," with a veil upon his face, like Moses, the other came in

the spirit of "that which is permanent" and is far more glorious. The veil is removed, "and wheresoever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Such, briefly, was the Spirit of Jesus, original, creative, abounding in grace and truth which one may feel without being able fully to define. For of His life, or of the spirit of His life, it would be true to say that

> "Life is what none can express,
> A quickness which my God hath kist."

There is no part of the gospel tradition in which one may come so near to this quickness, or be so sure of contact with it as in the parables. The parable was not original to Jesus, but in His hands, like everything else that He touched, it became a new thing and a signal instrument of His originality. The parables have not all been transmitted in the form in which they were spoken at the first, their artistic unity, their beauty sometimes broken by the intrusion of the moral application which betrays the hand of the evangelist rather than that of the author. Something of the same thing is found elsewhere in all the gospels.

But with this exception which is true of only some of them, the parables are full of an extraordinary charm and brilliancy, and as works of Art and Religion alike they are as new to-day as in the long ago, and their value is imperishable. Born both of the genius of the poet, sensitive to form, and to the needs and susceptibilities of His hearers, and of the genius of the seer rapt by the open vision of the things of God. There is but little indeed in the treasure of His thought which Jesus has not brought out into these glowing tales of His imagining, these flashes of "the quickness which my God hath kist," these

> "swift shapes and sounds which grow
> More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind
> And, veil by veil, evil and error fall."

If this were the time or place one might deal with the parables in some detail, and try to show that they each present an aspect of His "very varied" thought of God and man, and all reflect the newness of His spirit. One of them may, perhaps, be noticed here in passing for the vivid indication which it offers of the new and spring-like world to which the parables belong. In

depicting "the men of this generation" Jesus made use of a telling illustration drawn from a game which children were wont to play in the manner of a dance, and now in that of a dirge, but without being able to attract their playmates to join with them in either dance or dirge. "We piped unto you and you would not dance, we wailed and you would not mourn." "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say 'He hath a devil.' The Son of man came eating and they say, 'Here is a glutton and drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners.'" Both alike distasteful and unwelcome to the men of this generation. When they saw the Baptist in his spare ascetic garb, and heard his stern and threatening words, they craved for something less severe, and when they saw Jesus living His so free and friendly life, and listened to His genial speech, they craved for something more severe, like the children refusing to play the dance or play the dirge. Now Jesus, in so describing His generation, was glancing at the same time, as one may think, at the difference between the message of the Baptist and His own. Jesus came on the

scene preaching and saying as John had said, "Repent, the reign of heaven is near." But whereas in John's lips the words were the mandate of a law, in His lips they were the music of a Gospel. The one voice warned men to flee from the coming wrath, the other appealed to men to "Come unto Me . . . and I will refresh you." The one speaker held aloof, and dwelt in the wilderness, the other moved about the abodes of men, their radiant healer, teacher, saviour. While the one breathed out threatenings of axe and fan and fire, the other bent down beside men and poured the oil and wine upon their wounds. The one wailed that men might beat their breasts, the other played that men might dance. It is the difference between Law and Gospel, and nothing is so certain as that Jesus' message from the first had in it the singing note which was absent from the utterance of John. It was the Evangel, a fact which the early Christians sought to shadow forth in their picture of the night of the nativity as all alight with a choir of the heavenly host ecstatic over the advent of the Saviour thus announced, "Be not afraid, for lo! I am bringing you good news, news

of a great joy which shall be to all the people." For as many as received the good news were filled with a great joy, joy so great that words were not able to express it. They caught the lilt, the fervour, the ecstatic spirit of the Gospel, and made the pages of the New Testament ring as the angels made that holy night. For the New Testament as compared with the Old is a book that sings, as though a cloud had been removed, a dread cast out, and the human soul had seen at last the real object of its need, and seeing could not choose but sing. There is nothing in literature that strikes this new note of exultation like the New Testament. On one occasion it is told that Jesus " exulted in the Holy Spirit," and the same intense word " exult " is found in the song of Mary, and in one of the Beatitudes, in the Gospel of St. John, and the Acts of the Apostles, and elsewhere. Although the word occurs in the Septuagint, the spirit of the word belongs essentially to the New Testament. It has come to its own in the Gospel.

The writers all through write like men who feel the same, " the Holy Spirit in the heart," and are fain to impart the bliss, the beatitude as fully as

they can. They all dance to the new song. They are the friends of the bridegroom, and leap with joy at the sound of his voice. They rejoice with him over one and another who were lost and are found. They have never seen the like of it before. They see him bringing forth the best robe and putting it on the penitent, and giving him a ring for his hand, and sandals for his feet, and they cannot but revel with him and rejoice. In the New Testament one can hear, or overhear, an air of revel as of a wedding-feast or festival. Frequently the word εὐφραίνω, "to revel," is found, mostly, it is true, in quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament, but here again it is touched, like the word "exult," with a new significance. How indeed could those who are the friends of the bridegroom do aught but share his mirth? And further, they are just as ready to share it even when, like Paul and Silas, they are beaten with rods, and cast into the inner prison. Even there they cannot choose but sing. They are fellow-prisoners in Christ Jesus. It does not shock or surprise them that a fiery trial comes to test them as though it were some strange unheard-

of happening. They are but sharing what Christ endured, fellow-sufferers with Him, and so it becomes them to rejoice in it. And when His glory is revealed their joy will be complete ; they will rejoice and exult, which is the same rapturous word as in the phrase " He exulted in the Holy Spirit." " If you are reproached for the sake of Christ you are blessed ; for then the Spirit of glory, yes, the Spirit of God is resting upon you " (1 Pet. iv. 12-14). The whole passage rings with the triumphant note of the last of the Beatitudes : " Blessed are you when men reproach you and persecute you and utter all manner of evil against you for My sake: rejoice, and exult in it, for your reward is great in heaven, that is how they persecuted the prophets before you." But no one has grasped the paradox of that beatitude with such daring insight as Paul. For in letter after letter he repeats his own conviction that he is " in Christ " and being in Christ, a member of His body, his sufferings are " sufferings of Christ," " afflictions of Christ."

It is all so real to him, this sense of being " in Christ," " in the fellowship of blood with Christ,"

which is a fellowship of suffering, that the saying : " I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me," might be altered, as one has truly said, into : " I suffer, yet not I, but Christ suffers in me." Suffering, therefore, is transformed and so far from being accidental, or chaotic, or in vain, is native and essential to the highest life of all. And clearly, this is what he means when he breaks out in these impassioned words which have been so long and laboriously discussed : " I am suffering now on your behalf, but I rejoice in that ; I am filling up on my part what is lacking of all that Christ has to suffer in my person on behalf of His body, which is the church" (Col. 1.24). In other words, he perceives there is a sum of suffering which is his to render by virtue of his unity of life with Christ, and this he is fain to render to the full. It is a sacred task, or rather a sacred tryst, which fills him with joy.

And the same truth stands in the forefront even of the late Epistle of James, where the writer, although he does not connect it in Pauline fashion with the living Christ, connects it closely with the Sermon on the Mount : " greet it as pure joy,

my brothers, when you fall in with manifold trials, sure that what is sterling in your faith produces endurance ; only let endurance have its finished work that you may be finished and complete, lacking in nothing."

Sayings so original as these, instinct with the newness of the New Testament, are due directly to the creative action of the life and death of Jesus. They are the fruit of the Spirit which inspired His followers who are only trying to put into befitting speech what it has taught them or made them feel. For the New Testament is a new world of feeling even more than of speech. In and through its speech there breathes an atmosphere which while it is powerfully is yet only partially expressed in this or that strain of words, however new and true. If it may be compared with anything else it may be compared with that sound from heaven on the day of Pentecost " as of the rushing of a mighty wind, which filled the whole house where they were seated. And they saw tongues like flames distributing themselves, one resting on the head of each, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Unquestionably there is this element

of wind and of fire in the New Testament, and one must bring some sense or feeling of it to the task of interpretation. Much as there is in the New Testament, in the writings of Paul, and the Fourth Evangelist, e.g., that is borrowed from foreign thought, it is all swept up into the new Religion and serves the purpose of its own inner life. Nothing that is borrowed but is transformed by the creative principle which makes it one with itself. The alien is assimilated and becomes ally to the Spirit that reigns, and reconciles all things in itself. Everywhere the New Testament is instinct like nature with a life and a spirit of its own. A sound as of the wind is in its words, a gleam as of fire that is not quenched. And this is the reason, surely, why Art has been so powerfully attracted to the New Testament, and why it has so often seen or felt or found what scholarship and theology have so often missed. It can express things which can never be expressed in terms of doctrine. In a Latin address to his patron, William Byrd, the English musician, who is now placed in the company of the greatest masters, comments on

" the beauty of the words themselves," and then proceeds to say " there is a certain hidden power, as I learned by experience, in the thoughts underlying the words themselves, so that, as one meditates upon the sacred words and constantly and seriously considers them, the right notes in some inexplicable manner suggest themselves quite spontaneously."

That the right notes should thus suggest themselves spontaneously is a striking proof of hidden power. And again and again it has been given to Art to capture this hidden power, and along with it the wonder of the message which " they heard from the beginning." It has been said that in that first age the Gospel was literally the good news, and the surprise and exultation of good news can only be felt once. But surely this is not quite true when we think of the newness, a newness, as of nature itself, which has drawn the Arts to the New Testament and of the wonder, the pathos and the ecstasy with which they have been able to express the new feeling towards God, and the new attitude to life which make the New Testament what it is. Carlyle says that " all inmost things,

we may say, are melodious ; naturally utter themselves in Song." If " all deep things are Song," then the fact that music, not to speak of the other arts, has found so much of its inspiration in the New Testament shows that there is something in common between the soul of the one and the song of the other ; that the song is the soul still speaking like as it spoke at the first. It is the discovery or recovery, or both, of the melody that lies hidden in the Gospel. In other words the type of thought which we owe to Christ is musical or poetic rather than dogmatic, and the dogmatic method of interpretation will always fall short as applied to things which can never be fully or fitly expressed in terms of doctrine. And part of the priceless service of the arts consists in reminding us that there is more than doctrine in the thoughts of Christ, and of His first interpreters, that they are surging with a great life of their own, " a quickness which my God hath kist," glowing with a spirit of grace and power, the wonderful light of an ideal that never was on sea or land before, and that they carry the same appeal to-day as in the long-ago to the imagination and the love which

can alone feel them or ever fulfil them. One must therefore agree with the remark of a notable scholar of our time that if Paul had written his letters for future generations, he would not have coined his wonderful expressions for Anselm or Johann Gerhard but for Johann Sebastian Bach.

And this leads to the conclusion of what has now been said as to the supreme reality of the world of imagination ; the world in which Jesus lived His beatific life and those, too, who saw His glory, and joined themselves to Him, and spoke and wrote when they were moved by His spirit. With His long deep gaze He saw into the life of things in Nature,

> " A never-failing principle of joy
> And purest passion,"

in Man a being " instinct with Godhead," and in God, the Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

> " One Spirit over ignorance and vice
> Predominant in good and evil hearts."
>
> " A gracious Spirit o'er this earth presides
> And o'er the heart of man."

The world was born anew by the visionary power

of thoughts like these, it became a new creation after the fashion of His spirit, a work of Art if ever there was a work of Art in the high sense of the poet who wrote,

"Ah! Then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

For that supremely is what Christ added by His life and work upon the earth, and now the winds and waters echo back the accents of His voice, and the ancient hills are vocal with His prayer, and the meadows and the harvest fields break forth into parable, and not an infant of days but wears the halo of His touch, and joy is exalted to beatitude, and peace that passeth understanding is given,

"nor peace alone,
But faith sublimed to ecstasy."

There is nothing, indeed, to compare with what this creative spirit in Jesus—love active in imagination—has done and been for the material well-being and the spiritual life and destiny of mankind.

In a remarkable passage a little-known writer

says : " What was Christ's view and example in regard to this great faculty of idealism ? Why He created a hundredfold more fictitious personages and events than Dickens or Thackeray, or any other novelist ever did. We read that He seldom spoke to the people except in parables." And what were His parables ? They were *ideals* that were more vivid than the abstract *reals* of actual human life. They were fictions that were more truthful than facts, and more instructive. They were fictitious transactions, experiences, and actors ; but every one of them had a true human basis, or possibility of fact which carried its instructions to the listener's mind with the double force of truth. Take, for example, the Prodigal Son. Historically he was a fiction. But to the universal and everlasting conscience and experience of mankind there has not been a human son born into this world for two thousand years endowed with such immortal life and power as that young man. He will live for ever, he will give power,

> " As long as the heart has passions,
> As long as life has woes."

He will travel down all the ages, and in living sympathy and companionship with the saddest experiences of human nature, he will stand at every door and lair of sin and misery and shame ; he will stand there as he stood in his rags, hunger, and contrition among the swine, and say to the fallen with his broken voice and falling tears : " I will arise and go unto my Father and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants."

"The Good Samaritan historically was as fictitious a being as the Prodigal Son. But what one man has lived on the earth since he was introduced to the world who has been worth to it the value of that ideal character ? . . . For ever and for ever as long as men shall fall among the thieves that beset the narrow turnings of life, or into the more perilous ambush of their own appetites and passions, so long the Good Samaritan will seek for them with his lantern in one hand, and his cruet of oil in the other, and pour the healing sympathy of his loving heart into their wounded spirits ;

and with a hand and voice soft and tender with God's love, raise the fallen, bind up their wounds, and bring them back to the bosom of the great salvation."

CHAPTER IV

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

THE newness of spirit and of life which Jesus achieved, expressed, imparted, of all this the New Testament is, as everyone admits, the outstanding witness. It is the New Testament because it is the appreciation and the presentation of "what existed from the beginning, of what we heard, of what we saw with our eyes, of what we beheld and touched with our hands concerning the Word of life," etc. (1 John i. 1, 2). Its language, therefore, is steeped in feeling. It is fraught with sight and with insight. It is born anew in order to communicate the new sphere, or, rather, the new atmosphere of thought and action, of imagination and love into which the writers themselves have been born, and in which they breathe. Hence their words are not merely "under-agents in their souls." Unlike those of whom the poet says that,

"When they are grasping with their greatest strength
They do not breathe among them,"

the writers of the New Testament do breathe among the words with which they strive to make known " that one Face," which has " become their universe that feels and knows." Their words are touched with that almost indefinable quality of atmosphere which belongs to every great work of Art, and without which it cannot be called great, or even a work of art at all.

It would not be possible here to deal in detail with the words and phrases of the New Testament, all of them with an atmosphere of their own caught from the newness of life in Christ. But it would suffice, perhaps, to consider one word into which the new atmosphere has stolen, and in which it has stayed, the word " mystery " as in the phrases " the mystery of Christ," " the mystery of the Kingdom of God," " the mystery of the Gospel." In attempting this task it is needful to think back as fully and fairly as we can into the first Christian age and into the first results of thought upon the personality of Jesus. It was but gradually, as one can see, that the extraordinary nature of His personality arose upon the first interpreters, and took possession of their

minds. There are only fragments, after all, of reminiscence and reflection in the Gospels as they stand, scarcely more, at times, than syllables or whispers of the same, but these are informed, somehow, with something that is inexhaustible, the ages turning unfilled to them again and yet again ; wherein lies the proof of the greatness of the fact and of the inspired perception of its witnesses. The wonder is that the evangelists were able to collect and correlate not so little but so much of what was new to them, and past their telling—" the inexplorable wealth of the Christ " —and of so much also that has been as a fountain of life to men in all generations. It is not the brevity of the Gospels, or their limitations and defects that first or last impress the mind, but a certain flavour of poetic fullness all their own, an affluence of thought and suggestion which are there as in the supreme things of Art, the presence of an element of vision and of nearness to reality itself. Much of the world's greatest Art is small in bulk, but rich in beauty, and the test of Art is never bulk but beauty. And tried by a test like this the Gospels stand alone in the thing

they say, and the way they say it on every page.

If one is ever to arrive at the world of wonder and of life in which they move, one must needs approach them with something of the eye and the spirit which produced them. One must get there first, if one is ever to bring their wealth to the world in which we live. To this end the critical method is, no doubt, indispensable, but of itself is not enough save as it springs from and issues in one that is constructive through and through. Criticism is but the practice of the pruning of the branch that beareth fruit that it may bear more fruit. More fruit, if possible, not less or none at all, is the aim and end of all constructive criticism.

Now, may we say, it is a part of the fruit thus obtained, both that there is a process of reflection in the Gospels and in the New Testament as a whole upon the fact of Jesus, and that the process began before the great mind of Paul had any share in it at all. That it began in advance of Paul and reached a point as vital to his thought as to that of " those who had been apostles before him " is not always admitted. For some make it appear

as if Paul and his scheme of thought were independent of the original community, and had started up *de novo*, by themselves apart. It is even maintained that Paul is "the second founder" of Christianity inasmuch as the theology of the New Testament being a theology of redemption, first and last, is mainly due to his creative mind.

But surely there is some failure here to perceive, or, at least, to reckon with a certain element of doctrine or belief which one might describe as the nucleus of the Pauline thought itself, as already there and there supremely in the preaching and praxis of his predecessors ; that what was central in his belief was central, too, in theirs. Very many are persuaded that more value must now be attached to this primitive belief, or point of view. They do not say, of course, that in becoming the point of view of Paul it was not greatly altered and enriched in various ways, but only that it belongs to the soil and substance of his thought, which is incomprehensible without it.

It is not saying too much, in other words, that the main content of the Christian faith is one and the same for Paul as for Peter and the first apostles.

There is ground for holding that Peter is "the second founder" of Christianity in the sense that in "turning again" he turned to the innermost shrine of the Gospel, to "the first article of the Christian creed," the doctrine that "Jesus is the Christ" in the deep Christian meaning of the word. The evidence consists partly of an indication here, and an allusion there, on the part of Paul himself, and is enough to show that the idea did not originate with him, but was "received" by him as the truth of the Gospel which he preached, the Gospel which, as he recognized, was common to them both. However much it grew betimes and was transformed within his teeming brain it was really the living fact or force or fire which from the first impelled him to persecute and then to preach.

The crusade of the Pharisee was born in a sense of the same insight as the career of the Christian. It was because he saw in his victims, in the angel face of Stephen, and in the faces of those who "were baptized into Christ," that the righteousness of law was frustrated by a righteousness apart from law, the righteousness of God

which is through faith in Jesus Christ, that he threw himself upon them with " threatening and slaughter." It was because he saw in a flash the other side of the same truth, that the righteousness of grace availed where that of law had failed, that he turned to it with all the longing of his heart and mind. " If righteousness is through law, then Christ died for naught." " Ye are naught as regards Christ, ye are entirely separated from Him, ye who would be justified by law : ye are fallen away from grace" (Gal. ii. 21, v. 4).

From all of which it appears that the word of grace was at first the provocation, and then the inspiration, at first the " goad " of the persecutor, and then the glory of the apostle. It was the truth of the Gospel, the dynamic truth, which, as both his history and preaching prove, was not original to him, but original rather to the man who " turned again and strengthened the brethren." To Paul the experience of Peter was the confession of the fact that a man is not justified by the works of law but only through faith in Jesus Christ, and even if the confession on his part did not carry all, or nearly all that it implied to the

larger mind of Paul, still it was his to begin with ; his, first of all, to achieve the transition from the Christ of the Jewish hope to the Christ of the Christian faith. It was not, surely, at Cæsarea Philippi where Peter answered and said " Thou art the Christ," that he achieved the transition, not there that he found the secret of the Christ in the Christian sense, or was hailed with the great ascription, " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," etc. For, as the stern rebuke administered and the novel teaching prove (Mark viii. 31-34), the disciple there and then had only reached a stage upon the high and arduous path of spiritual truth, and there was many another stage to pass,

" O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent "

till his humbled spirit was exalted to discern the mystery of the Christ and the Kingdom. For him as for the rest there was the difficult ascent to accomplish from the Jewish standpoint to the Christian, from the Messiah of the one to the Christ of the other, or from the ethics and religion of law to the ethics and religion of grace. The creative ascent from law to grace, this, as Paul

explains, was the achievement of others before himself, and the mystery of the gospel which he began by assailing and ended by proclaiming in its magnitude of grace and truth. Hence Peter and Paul are at one in their belief in Jesus as the Christ, and of their Christology the fountain head is Christ himself.

As the author in 1 Peter v. 12 expressly states, his aim in writing is " to testify that this is what the true grace of God means," and if such is the aim of his writing, it is yet more its atmosphere and the atmosphere, too, that belongs to the primitive Church and is the most novel thing about it. For an atmosphere is something more than an aim that is expressed in words however true ; and in the New Testament from beginning to end there is nothing more distinctive than the atmosphere pervading it in every part and making it profoundly one amid its difference. One might say that the study of the New Testament is more a study in the subtleties of atmosphere than in the significance of words. Those at any rate who hold that atmosphere is an element that belongs to literature as much as to Art can no more

doubt the presence of it in the New Testament, and the wonderful newness of it there, than they can doubt the newness, for example, of the Gothic style of architecture as compared with the Romanesque from which it sprang. Not only the aim, but the atmosphere of Gothic is charged with a new-born principle of life unknown to the other. "Of all events in the history of architecture the transition from Romanesque to Gothic is incomparably the most striking and dramatic." And something similar might be said, generally, of the transition from the Old Testament to the New. The aim is different, but more different is the atmosphere that flows through its thought and utterance. It is the witness, chiefly, of its newness as a whole.

Even if some may not admit this view of atmosphere or its "value" to this extent, they must needs admit that the words of the New Testament are instinct with a spirit and informed with a truth that need to be felt as well as known, breathed in no less than thought out. A noted scholar says that "in the religiously creative period which came first of all the power of

Christianity to form *new* words was not nearly so large as its effect in *transforming* the meaning of old words." The transformation of meaning sprang from a transformation of life or of atmosphere, just as the transformation of Gothic did ; and the point for us here is that the primitive Church as a whole partook of the transformation. Was it not this that thrust it into being and made it an Ecclesia or Church at all ; this that from the first explains community and creed alike ? Hence when Paul became a member of the Church it was a Church already throbbing with a life and quick with an air of exultation peculiarly its own, in no way due to him or to his influence, but due to revelation from above working through the creative personality of Jesus upon the mind and heart of the man who first of all confessed Him in the Christian sense. " Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Surely it was in virtue of the revelation given and received not merely at Cæsarea Philippi, but mainly at the moment when he turned again that Peter was hailed as " this rock " upon which

" I will build my church." The point before us is that the Church as the offspring both of revelation and of faith was already there in reality, with its appointed " Lord and Christ," and its new creative creed or principle or power of grace, ere ever Paul began to persecute or preach at all. And we may say that but for it and its dynamic " dipped in blood," Paul had never chanced to play the part of either foe or friend.

There is reason, then, to believe that it fell to Peter first among men and not to Paul to grasp the truth concerning Jesus as the Christ in Jesus' own sense, that, in other words, it was his first to take " God's view of things and not man's." Paul is not speaking for himself alone, but for all the bearers of the gospel message, most of all for those who had been " apostles before him," when he declares, " We (of the ministry of the new covenant) henceforth know no man after the flesh ; yea though (as Jews) we have known a Christ after the flesh, i.e., a Christ 'after the things of men,' yet now would we know (such a Messiah) no more." He is thinking of the ascent from " Jewish Messianism " to " Christian Christol-

ogy," and, clearly, he does not make it originate with himself. Rather, he, like those before him, has attained to the secret of Christhood, the eternal secret which has now at length been revealed to the Christian Church. He and they are at one in their appreciation and acceptance of the Christ of God.

Now this is what Paul, with a far wider grasp of all it means, attempts to express in the frequent phrase "the mystery of Christ." Mystery in this connection is one of the words especially whose meaning was transformed. It is caught up into and breathes the new atmosphere. To catch or keep the newness of the new ideal it has to expand into something new itself. From denoting a secret that *must* be concealed, it comes to denote a secret that has been revealed, an "open secret." In this sense it is found alongside words of revelation, as though revelation were now connected with a secret, and it stands pre-eminently for the secret of God which has now been revealed in the universal Christ—the Christ alike of Jew and Greek—and which it is the mission of its "stewards" to declare to all who

have ears to hear. Paul may haply have found the word, as he found so much else, in the Greek world of his adoption ; " the word was everywhere current in the Greek religious world." But he could have found it nearer to his hand in thr Jewish world of his birth. The roots of both his being and belief were fixed in native soil. Far as he fared in other lands and deep as he drank of other streams of life and thought, yet it was always as one who had tasted of the living waters of Jerusalem. One can always overhear the ancient cry upon his lips, " If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." It was from thence he drew his genius for religion, and his impassioned zeal for God and righteousness, and as for the cast or fashion of his piety, ethical and mystic both, it is in great part akin to that of the Old Testament itself.

There is a strain of what, for a better word, we may call mysticism in the Old Testament and in subsequent products of Rabbinic thought which seems to be ignored in the overstress which is often laid on Jewish legalism. It is vital to Paul and to his spiritual ancestry. In view of this it

may be said that " the word, with its correlative, revelation, was at hand in the region of the Apostle's own Jewish training, and we need not seek a heathen origin for his use of it." At the same time, one so intent as Paul and so mentally alert would be drawn to a word which he would meet elsewhere, which was in the air he breathed as he travelled far and wide, a word of more than usual significance and which would serve as a kind of link betwixt the worlds that mingled in his mind and ministry. The word was there in both worlds awaiting, as it were, the infusion of a larger truth. The point here is that Paul, whether he took the word from Jew or Greek or both, was able in the fullest sense to make the infusion, turning it to the service of his thought, and his thought, different in form as it is, is one substantially with the thought of the primitive Church itself.

Thus in Mark iv. 10, it is reported that Jesus, being asked about the parables by a company of His adherents and the twelve, said, " To you the mystery of the Kingdom of God is committed ; but to those outsiders it all comes in parables " :

where mystery stands, as in the language of Paul, for a secret that is not to be concealed but revealed to all who have it in them to believe, an "open secret." If the notion of "something kept secret" always belongs to the term, that is, no doubt, mainly in the sense which the passage implies, that the revealing depends upon a certain aptitude in the hearer. The hearer has always his part in the imparting of truth. Thus in the parallel in Matthew (xiii, 10-15) there occurs a saying, which is found elsewhere, emphasizing the condition under which the revelation is to be made, "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even what he hath." The saying is perhaps inserted here as Mark has it at a later point (Mark iv. 25, Luke viii. 18), and Matthew, also, in the parable of the Talents (xxv. 29), but it helps to elucidate a principle pertaining to the parables and the person alike, that to those who are insensitive, preoccupied, unsympathetic, "outside," the mystery remains a mystery, the very means of showing shrouding it, while to those who are sensitive,

single, sympathetic; "of the truth" it is open and convincing as the light.

And is it not just this vital principle, drawn as it is from common life, that underlies the words otherwise so hard to understand, recorded by Mark, beginning "*That* seeing they may see and not perceive," and those by Matthew, "*Because* seeing they see not"? In the use of parable, a form so characteristic of His teaching and His truth, it was not Jesus' purpose to perplex or punish, but to charm, illuminate, instruct; but, as experience proved, His purpose hung upon another factor, the responsiveness, or the lack of it in men, and, like the prophet long before Him, Jesus had to meet an irresponsiveness, active and inactive both, which did not love the truth and turned its light into darkness and its blessing into woe.

That this was not the aim or purpose of the parables, whatever their result might often be, is shown by the statement at the end of the passage in Mark, "And in many such parables did He speak the word to them, as they were able to hear it; but without a parable He did not speak to

them. And in private He explained everything to His own disciples" (Mk iv. 33-34). "As," or, "so far as, they were able to hear or understand it" is a luminous touch which seems to hold the truth about the parables—that they were meant in every case to teach but just in proportion as the hearer had it in him to listen, and to learn more or less according to "the means embraced." For:

> "The means that heaven yields must be embraced
> And not neglected."

There is nothing in the passage, as a whole, that seems to be at variance with this law.

And yet there are those who deny that Jesus ever spoke these words about the mystery of the Kingdom for the reason that "an esoteric teaching was wholly alien to the historic Jesus." What is usually understood by esoteric teaching—teaching communicated to the few but not communicated to the many—was indeed alien to Jesus, and no such thing, surely, is suggested by the passage before us. In a saying which is found in Mark, and elsewhere in other connections, Jesus disclaims the idea of anything being hidden or made secret in order to remain as such. "For

there is nothing hidden except that it should come to light, nor is anything made a secret except that it might come into the open."

Clearly, then, a teaching with such an aim or motive behind it, to which, indeed, conditions are attached, but conditions inseparable from the teaching itself, is no more esoteric than is the beauty that depends upon the virtue of the seeing eye, or the hearing ear. It is not easy to understand why the thought of more being revealed to some than to others should be considered as unworthy of Jesus when it is actually true to life itself. It was inevitable that teaching so intense and personal as His with its appeal to, or, rather, at times its assault upon the soul should excite the most dissimilar response—in some, one of attraction and interest growing into faith, in others one of opposition and resentment ending in offence. Even among those who were disposed to believe, the disciples themselves, there was often a dullness, often an absence of the needed insight as in those "without." They failed at the time to pierce the parabolic veil, and catch the principle involved. But this was not

because there was anything esoteric in the teaching, but only because it was so full of spiritual depth and daring, and called for further effort and expansion of the spirit in them.

Thus on one momentous day He said to His disciples, " Let these words sink into your ears ; for the Son of Man shall be delivered up into the hands of men." Mark says that " they understood not the saying and were afraid to ask him"; Matthew, less severely, that " they were greatly distressed," and Luke goes so far as to say, " but they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them to prevent them from understanding it "—such being the divine purpose. But even so it was only for the time being, inasmuch as it was truth that was new and strange and startling, and could not be easily grasped, or all at once. It was but gradually, and step by step, as it were, that even the disciples came to master what He meant and who He was. It was natural that as in His Person, so in His word, there should be something deeply interfused that was difficult to fathom, and that could only yield up its secret in course of time to the seeking mind.

"He that hath to him shall be given." A word like His which bore so profoundly on the conscience and the life of men could not but require of them a corresponding attitude. That Jesus was aware of there being more in what He said than met the ear is shown by the frequent phrase, "He who has ears to hear, let him listen." But, again, there is no question of the esoteric here, and simply the mystery of divine truth whose nature is to be revealed.

May we not say, then, that "mystery" in the novel setting of the Gospel is transformed, and instead of meaning something dark which it is impious to disclose, it is lightsome as the thought of God, and must needs disclose itself to every kindred mind, to every heart

"That watches and receives"?

In a word the soul or sense of mystery is not darkness but light, the open and not the obscure.

It may be said that there are two kinds or phases of mystery. There is one mystery of the night, and another mystery of the light, but that of the light is a mystery as that of the night is not. Here is an object, and it lies beneath "the

dragon wing of night," without shape or hue so far as we can see, or aught to make it known, and we say, " How mysterious ! " But let night withdraw its wing, and the object pass into the light, and how much more of a mystery now that it is seen in all its wealth of colour and of form, and as it stands related to the mighty world. So it is not when a jewel is hidden or opaque that we are conscious of its mystery, but when it starts to flash and glitter in the sun, and when the tints concealed within its heart come floating up as from some endless fount of light. There is really no end to what this or that object has to tell about itself once it is seen into, and set in its own appointed place within the whole. Is it not possible, to quote again a great utterance—

> " To see the world in a grain of sand,
> And a heaven in a wild flower ;
> Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour " ?

Not one of the sciences of Nature, e.g., but has been and is engaged in sweeping cloud and darkness from the face of the universe, but not one has swept away aught of its vital mystery. Rather, in opening up far-stretching spheres of life and

law the sciences have enlarged the eye and prospect of the mind, and the infinite wonder of the world therewith. In scattering the mystery of darkness they have increased the mystery of light. Their task is nothing less than to transform the mystery of darkness into the mystery of light : of chaos into that of cosmos far and near. On one occasion when a certain astronomer was scanning a cloudless sky, Sirius in all its grandeur shot into the field of his telescope, and the extraordinary beauty of the sight gave him such a shock of pain that he " was obliged to close his eyes to prevent his fainting." More beauty, more law and order, more method, meaning, mystery, such is the nature of the world that is displayed to the unresting gaze of men.

One may perhaps recall in this connection, as another illustration of the same, that in "The Dream of Gerontius" the disembodied spirit, darting from the angel's hold in the utter impulse of its love, presses onwards to the "awful Throne," where consumed, yet quickened by the glance of God, he cries,

" Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,

. . . . . .

Take me away
That sooner I may rise, and go above
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day."

For as yet his powers, expanded though they were, were not equal to the fullness of the beatific light. And such is the nature of the spirit of man whose reach exceeds its grasp, but whose grasp is instinct with a reach that can rest only in the ultimate perfection of the Divine.

The principle implied in all such things is that with the more light there is the more mystery. The more that nature is seen and human nature known the farther they lead up to the mansions of divinity. Mystery is the element or atmosphere in which divinity abides. One of the greatest of modern craftsmen has truly said that " mystery is like a kind of atmosphere which bathes the greatest works of the masters ; every great work has this quality of mystery." If there is mystery in the work of the masters, how much more in the length and breadth and height and depth of the Divine. Yet not the mystery of darkness,

but the mystery of light. "Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." But that does not mean, in Him is no mystery at all. Time was when men thought of God as a mystery of darkness; now we think of God as a mystery of light. Once God was mysterious because He concealed Himself; now God is mysterious because He reveals Himself. Revelation is not the negation of mystery, but, like science in its own order, the transformation of the mystery of darkness into the mystery of light.

> "My God, how wonderful Thou art,
> Thy majesty how bright,
> How beautiful Thy mercy-seat
> In depths of burning light."

Revelation is never the dispersion of these depths of light, but their disclosure depth after depth as men are able to receive them. This is what St. John with rare insight says of the Word that "became flesh"; "for of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace," i.e., grace in the place of grace, grace succeeding grace, like wave succeeding wave, perpetually, grace continually

renewed. It might be said to be but another way of saying, "For he who hath, to him shall more be given, and given abundantly." Wordsworth tells of a man who would gaze

> "On the more distant scene—how lovely 'tis
> Thou seest—and he would gaze till it became
> Far lovelier, and his heart could not contain
> The beauty, still more beauteous."

Just as beauty to the seeing eye is still more beauteous, so to him who has truth it is still more true, and grace is still more gracious. Revelation, therefore, might be described as a process in which there is at once more disclosure and more depth to disclose, more unfolding and more fullness to unfold, more wonder, more worship, more meaning, more mystery. Revelation is such, in other words, that mystery is always passing into meaning, and meaning again is always passing into mystery.

> "Nothing is hidden save that it should be disclosed,
> Nothing concealed but that it should be revealed."

Of meaning and mystery alike the final word is light. And the nature of light is to shine, or communicate itself:

> "For everything that becomes manifest is light."

Now a principle like this, belonging as it does to reality, in the true sense elemental, comes to its own supremely in such an elemental personality as the Christ. Simply for the reason that no historic person has taken hold so profoundly of the historic process none is at once so wrapt in the air of mystery, and so rich, so radiant with meaning far and near. " For, verily, not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren," etc (Heb. ii, 16-17). Here, the likeness being of necessity and not of accident, or an afterthought, lies in His having in Himself the essential things of human personality, and all at such a pitch and potency of life as to let their elemental truth be seen. Of all " His brethren " He pressed the farthest into the " abysmal deeps " of life and death and destiny, and is therefore man as none of them is man prepared to body forth the mystery of God. To body forth the mystery of God He must needs convert it into meaning—meaning of such magnitude as both to illumine the minds and enlarge the hearts of men upon the ways of time. He must translate it into

terms of life and thought, of light and atmosphere adapted to the complex nature of a soul, like the soul of man, already haunted by divinity, " moving about in worlds not realized." For it was to no mere nascent world that Jesus came, but to one " of old time " taught and tutored in the things of God, a seeker after God if haply it might find Him. If it was to a world of prophets and of pilgrims flushed with promise Jesus came, He came Himself as no mere stranger from afar, nor as unrelated and alone, but as one belonging to a line of old succession on the earth, bent upon fulfilling promise and declaring God to men.

Thus He took His stand beside the Baptist and avowed his work. Clearly it was within the bounds of a process long begun that Jesus set His feet and went about His task—a fact that is proved both by His witness to the process, and by the dynamic action of His life and thought upon it. His sense of mission from above might be never so high, yet in no wise did it part Him from the process. " Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets ; I came not to destroy but to fulfil," is, surely, a wonderful insight into the

continuity of past and present. In other words, process and person, person and process were all of one, "of one piece, one whole." The process organic to the person, the person no less organic to the process! The extensive preparation of the one, so to speak, was in accord with the intensive adaptation of the other. It is not a matter open to question, since history has shown that in His person there was that supremely which appealed to Gentile and to Jew alike. What if He was "born under law," and bred in Israel's faith He was nevertheless akin to the whole family of men, "the mediator of a better covenant," the "Apostle" of a universal grace. Just herein lay the mystery of Christ to the mind of Paul, that in Him both divisions of the race were included in a common human hope, fused together in the eternal purpose of God. "The mystery on which Paul delights to dwell is the implication of all humanity in the Christ, the new human hope, a hope for all men of all conditions, a hope not for men only but even for the universe."

The originality of Jesus, then, is that standing where He did in the historic order, the order of

time, He was able to bring its elemental or creative principle to light, clothing it in a manhood, and a message, of such luminous power that it has never ceased to challenge and convince the awakened soul of man; never ceased to challenge, for being creative it evokes the power implanted in the soul; and never ceased to convince, for, again, being creative, it mingles with and magnifies "the light that lighteth every man." And the feature of Christianity is this creative personality standing at its core, and the core of history alike, diffusing the light or the power of a kindred life to the life of men. Who has expressed or can express the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about a personality that stands at a point of time where the ages meet, and there as from a centre speaks of God in such a language and a life as make Him real and still more real, and continually in him that hath inspires the sense of wonder and adoring love? Who can exhaust the depths of burning light in this personality? The Creeds and the Christologies, far from exhaustimg them, do but partial justice even to those they claim to see. The arts, too, although they often outrun the

creeds, " stand afar off " like " the women who followed with Him from Galilee." It is from one depth of burning light to another in the Christ as in the God Whom He reveals. The more He is known, the more there is to know. The more luminous, the more alluring ; the more manifest the more mysterious—like the light itself, or like beauty, goodness, truth. In the haunting tale of Emmaus there is a hint as to the law or method of His Self-unfolding. " And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight." Vision and then vanishing into the depths beyond ; sight and then light in excess of present sight ; knowledge and then the unknown as a fresh expansion to be won thereafter by the insight of the burning heart. " Did not our hearts burn within us while He spake to us in the way ? " which is a hint in turn of the law or process by which the mystery is revealed. The sight of the eye depends on the light of the heart. " For he that hath, to him shall more be given."

CHAPTER V

THE FINISHING-TOUCH OF JESUS

If the great instrument of moral good is the imagination, Jesus habitually used that instrument in a fashion peculiarly His own. He put Himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of His species became His own. Thus while John came preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, "Repent ye" so that there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem, Jesus went on His way through cities and villages teaching the same truth and other truths that have changed the world. His nourishment lay in doing the will of Him that sent Him, and in accomplishing, or completing or perfecting His work. He held the secret of the finishing-touch, as we find it in all great Art. There is the evidence of a supreme artistry of His own in the labours of His hands and in the language of His lips. Reading the poetry

of some master-poet one is aware, often unconsciously, so natural it seems, of the beauty of its speech and the truth or rightness of its thought. The speech is in tune with the truth, and the truth with the speech. The whole is like an air overheard from the voice of the Divine. The same is profoundly true of the fine art of Jesus, and a few of many illustrations which will be taken here, simply as they stand in the sacred text, may serve to unfold the fact.

Thus on one occasion a widow, usually called the widow of Nain, is wending her dejected way to the grave, and much people of the city are with her. Jesus is coming nigh to the gate of the same city with His disciples and a great multitude, and the two processions meet. His heart fills with swift compassion for the lonely mourner; "Weep not" He says, and at the touch of His hand instinct with spirit the bearers of the bier stand still. And then He speaks in the stillness, speaks with such authority as to one yet alive and able to receive the word of power, that the young man "awakes and remembers and understands." "*And he gave him to his mother.*" It is the

beautiful conclusion to the beautiful deed. It is how Jesus was wont to finish off, bring to an end, or accomplish His appointed work. One cannot but admire the beauty and completeness of the whole transaction. It goes out of His hand without a flaw.

And it does not stand alone, for it is based upon a principle which runs through His word and work alike, and gives them the finishing-touch which has made them what they are from age to age. One day there came to Jesus a man, Jairus by name, different from most of His supplicants in that he was a man of rank, a dignitary of the synagogue, appointed to supervise its worship. But if he was conscious of his dignity, the time was come to cast it aside, and fling himself at the feet of Jesus imploring Him to come into his house. "My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray Thee that thou come and lay Thy hands on her that she may be made whole and live." During an absorbing interval in which Jesus was engaged with the woman who revealed her piteous story in her touch upon the border of His garment, messengers came from

the house of Jairus saying, "Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master." "Do not be afraid," said Jesus to Jairus, on hearing the message, "only believe," only have faith in God that "all is not lost." Luke adds "and she shall recover." One should always believe, Jesus means, that God is present and is making all things work together for good. In reliance, therefore, not upon any extraordinary power of His own but on God's power and goodwill, Jesus went with the ruler to his house, allowing no one to go with Him but Peter, James and John, and dismissing in the street the large crowd that pressed on Him all round. Arriving at the house He beheld a tumult and heard the weeping and crying aloud of the mourners. Strong, however, in the conviction that God can help and that it is wrong to despair, Jesus went boldly in, and even before seeing the child, declared at once that weeping and wailing were out of place, because "she was not dead but asleep." And when they derided Him He took the strong hand with them, and brought the mourning to an end, putting all the mourners out of doors, and took with Him just

those who were in sympathy, the father and the mother and His own followers, and went in where the child was. And with His faith in God utterly unshaken, the Master of the situation, He took the child by the hand, and spoke to her as to one alive and listening, "Talitha cumi, Damsel, I tell thee, rise." She at once responded to the call, got up and walked, to the utter amazement of those present; "they were out of themselves with amazement" as one might say. And after Jesus had given many injunctions that no one should know of it, He finished off this great work, wrought step by step with the mastery that was His own; "*He commanded that something be given her to eat.*" Surely the crowning touch of the skill or art of the Master,

> "The Repairer of ruins
> Who maketh waste places a home again."

There are many other illustrations in the gospels of the same attention to detail, the same understanding of the part and the whole, the same finishing-touch. He once said "he that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much," and by this principle it was His habit to "go and do

likewise." Equally at home in the much and the very little—like the supreme painter, sculptor, musician. So when the man of Gadara would fain have clung fast to his healer, entreating Him that he might be with Him, Jesus did not permit it, but laid upon him a sacred charge which would occupy and invigorate his mind, leaving him among his own family and folk as a witness of the works of God. "Go home to your own people, and tell them all that the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he hath showed you." And he went away and began to proclaim all that Jesus had done for him, and everyone wondered.

Again, when Jesus came down from the mountain with the three disciples who had accompanied Him and who had seen the radiance of His inner life reflected with unusual brightness in His outward appearance—one of the supreme events of His career—He took by the hand and healed a boy whom his father had brought to the disciples without avail, their failure due to their little faith. "But if thou canst do anything," said the father, "help us, have compassion on us." To that "if thou canst" (τὸ εἰ δυνῃ) Jesus replies

—the article adding to the emphasis with which He repeated the father's words: "to him that believes, everything is possible," which means that it is for you rather than for me to determine whether this thing can be done. Nothing can be done in such a case on a mere supposition, a mere hypothesis. Anyone who believes enough in the mercy and power of God will feel that no difficulties whatever can thwart the divine intentions. The father sees this and immediately cries out, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Although he claims that he does believe, yet for all that he does not base his prayer on this but chiefly on the pity and compassion of the Master. And forthwith Jesus, speaking with a voice from the depths of his power, healed the boy, and grasping him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up. And as before He set the finishing-touch upon His work, "*He gave him back to his father.*"

They who are preoccupied with great affairs often excuse themselves for failing to observe those "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love, which are the best portion of a good

man's life"; but, the Redeemer, coming down even from that sacred mount, was not heedless of the least of His brethren or of the humblest act of service. Faithful in much, faithful also in a very little.

One more incident, in some ways the most remarkable of all. It was near the end of His life when all the forces of evil He had opposed were combining to destroy Him. "It was their hour, and the power of darkness." And, yet, He is so little self-absorbed that He gives Himself to the preparation of the Last Supper. The whole incident of the feast in the goodman's house is an exquisite piece of forethought and arrangement, one detail after another serving to express the purpose of His mind. "Go into the city," He tells two of His disciples, "and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him; and wheresoever he shall enter in, say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, where is my guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with My disciples? And he will himself show you a large upper-room furnished and ready; and there make ready for us."

He had thought it all out beforehand, the house, the signal of the man with the water-jar waiting near the gate of the city, the spacious upper-room already prepared as guest-chamber for a goodly company. And the disciples went forth, and came into the city and found everything as He had told them. It had all been provided as in the matter of the colt at Bethany by their Master, faithful in a very little, faithful also in much. It was as if by designed and definite action He was trying to express what He was soon to say, "Let not your heart be troubled . . . I go to prepare a place for you."

Now the completeness, or the touch of finish which gives such distinction to His actions is to be found as fully in the process of His thought and teaching. One cannot but be impressed by the unexpected way in which He answers some question, or brings some controversy to an end by a luminous and sufficient word; "for His word was with power." We are told that no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions. "The multitudes were

amazed at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority and not as their own scribes." And Mark adds, " they were all so amazed that they discussed it among themselves, saying, What is this ? A new teaching with authority, and He commands the unclean spirits too, and they obey Him." It was not only a word, but a power. It not only conveyed instruction but rang with such a tone that it swept through the soul and changed it.

When one says that the ἐξουσία (or power) of Jesus was felt not in the novelty of all that He said, but in His inborn knowledge of right and wrong, he surely forgets that the novelty of His word just consisted in the unexpected and arresting tone with which He delivered it, and thrust it home. The scribes relied chiefly on the authority of the past and on precedent, but He upon the clearness and courage of His own inner life. All through, therefore, His word was full of the novelty of His grace and truth. On one occasion He refused to give any judgment at all to a man who sought to use Him simply as a means to his own selfish ends, and there and then to

decide against his brother in some petty dispute about property. "Man," said Jesus sharply, "who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" And knowing what lay at the core of the man's request He took the opportunity of warning the multitude, "Take heed, and keep yourselves free from every form of covetousness, for it does not follow because a man has abundance that his life consists in wealth."

Again, when one enquired curiously, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" He gave no answer but "strive to enter in by the narrow door," etc. And He told James and John that it was not His to grant them the boon which they asked for themselves, "it is for them for whom it is prepared"; and speaking to the disciples concerning the future Kingdom, He said that "no one knoweth thereof, not even the angels of heaven, not even the Son, but the Father only." He was conscious of the limits under which He thought and taught and made no attempt in His wisdom to put them aside. But upon all the great things which had been delivered unto Him of His Father, the things concerning His Father's

character and kingdom and concerning man's supreme duty and destiny, He spoke out freely from the depths of His knowledge, and in language of the utmost strength and beauty. It sparkled with paradox as, e.g., in the Beatitudes.

But of all the reported sayings of Jesus, which, as we must bear in mind, we owe to reporters who each followed Him "afar off," the parables, or most of them, bring us most closely into contact with the mind of our Lord. On the one hand we have these jewels of thought and language to which some reference has been made, the brief, terse saying, be it axiom, proverb, or paradox, touched with "the quickness which my God hath kist"; and on the other that larger body of discourse which consists of the parables. The parable was by no means original to Jesus, but in His hands, like everything else He used, it became a new thing and the apt and fitting and, it might almost be said, the favourite mode or instrument of His speech.

An able Jewish writer* of to-day has gathered up several Rabbinic parables which he regards

* Abrahams, Studies in "Pharisaism and the Gospels," chap. xiii.

as parallels to the parables of Jesus, and of which he says that the inferiority is not always on the Rabbinic side as so many think. While, no doubt, they must be allowed to rank high in literature of this kind, yet they seem to have exerted but little influence by their thought and poetic power of suggestion, and even if "the parallels sometimes strike a note which finds no exact echo in the Synoptic examples," that is, surely, no mark of superiority unless the note is true. Is it not a matter of doubt whether the following example does express the true relation between God and man?

Rabbi Absolom the Elder says: A parable, to what is the matter like? To a man who was angry with his son, and banished him from his house. His friend went to beg him to restore his son to his house. The father replied: Thou askest of me nothing except on behalf of my son. *I am already reconciled with my son.* So the Omnipresent said unto him (Moses), "Wherefore criest thou unto me? Long ago have I become well-disposed to him (Israel)."

"Here, then," says our writer, "we have the idea

that the Father is reconciled to his erring son even before the latter or any intercessor makes appeal in accordance with the text. " Before they call I will answer " (Is. xiv. 24). He quotes also a similar idea found elsewhere ; and concludes that these expressions of the Father's love seem to go even beyond the beautiful pathos of Luke xv. 20. But reconciliation, surely, is not the gift of the one, independently of the appeal or approach of the other. It is a matter in which two wills are involved. Repentance, or moral renewal, as the prophets and as Jesus constantly taught, is vital to the other will, wanting which the gift is thrown away. How can the reconciling word run and be glorified if there are no broken hearts and contrite spirits ? God's love is a holy love and is most finely portrayed, and most truly, as history and experience have proved, in the parable of Luke xv. 11-32, where the father —his own father—while the younger son was yet afar off, saw him, and was moved with compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him tenderly. " As yet the son has said nothing," as one reminds us, " and the father does not know

in what spirit he has returned ; but it is enough that he *has* returned. The father has long been watching for this." It is the same father who " came out and intreated " the other son. There can be but very little doubt that the imaginative thought of this imperishable parable expresses the true relation between God and man. It bears the 'finishing-touch' of the teacher sent from God.

But it is no object of ours in these pages to compare Rabbinic parallels with the parables of Jesus, but only to look closely at a few of the latter, and catch something of their great beauty and truth as well as of the revealer of the mystery of the Kingdom of God. The parables are as full of light and charm to-day as of old, and, as works of art and of religion alike, their open secret is granted to those for whom they are prepared. The parables are fraught not only with the genius of a teacher sensitive to form, and bent upon evoking the various activities of his hearers, memory, taste, attention, appreciation, but also with the genius of a seer quick to unfold the vision of a truth or of a world of truth that quivered with the thought of God. We cherish

His parables for their beauty and their manifold truth. Jesus seems to have poured much of the riches of His thought of God and man into them, and His words enshrined in these inimitable tales shall not pass away.

Thus if we think of the brief parable which is found in St. Mark alone, of the seed growing up spontaneously : " So is the Kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed upon the earth ; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." And think also of the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, which takes its place in St. Matthew. The truth which they suggest is that while man has to make an effort of his own to establish the Kingdom of God, there is a point beyond which he cannot go, and must leave the rest to God. Seeingthat Jesus lived among people many of whom clamoured for the coming of the Kingdom as they regarded it, zealots and the like who believed that it would come because of their political agitation, and even of their fighting, may we not

perceive how essential it was to show, not in so many negative words, but by the winning power of suggestion, that a nearer likeness to the coming of the Kingdom lies in the growth of the seed which a man casts upon the earth, but once it is cast it is henceforth in the hands of God who can do what man cannot do of himself? Therefore "be thou still towards God, and wait patiently for Him," is the principle which is shadowed forth; and the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, which is either a continuation of, or another luminous application of the same principle, says in effect, do not attempt to separate the wheat and the tares until the harvest, which is the one object of God and man; do not thrust in impatient hands, till all things are ready, bide God's time, do all you can and leave all else to God.

"Not so in haste, my heart!
Have faith in God and wait.
Although He seems to linger long,
He never comes too late.

Until He cometh, rest,
Nor grudge the hours that roll;
The feet that wait for God, 'tis they
Are soonest at the goal;

Are soonest at the goal
That is not gained by speed,
Then hold thee still, O restless heart,
For I shall wait His lead."

Here, then, we come in touch with a vital point of the thought of Christ, a vital aspect of His thought of God, thrown out by means of these suggestive forms, but only an aspect. For there is an untold richness in His thought as in His imagination, and hence there are parables which suggest another attitude on the part of man in response to another expansion of the idea of God. There are the parables of the Faithful and the Unfaithful Servants, and of the Ten Virgins, which both strike the more piercing note, " Watch." The first says," watch," for the advent of the Christ may be *earlier* than you expect and may catch you unprepared ; and the second says " watch," for His advent may be *later* than you anticipate and may catch you asleep, in a condition in which you are not fit to share in the marriage-feast and " the door is shut." " Watch " is an intensification of " wait," the tuning of it up to a higher pitch, as it were, but each is characteristic of Jesus and His thought of God.

But if these exhausted all the types of the parables of Jesus, we should miss the most original and impressive of the truths which rose from the depths of His thought of God and found expression in His favourite form of teaching. If we were to argue that in His view the Kingdom of God would come without any supreme effort on His part and on the part of those that were with Him, would come assuredly in God's good time independently, for the most part, of men, we should lose the consummate principle of His life and thought. For when He said, "If I by the Spirit (Luke has 'finger') of God cast out demons then God's Kingdom has already come upon you," He was not referring merely to a Kingdom that lay in the future, far or near, but to one that by His own active personal agency in His mastery over Satanic power had already arrived. And it is but one of many utterances which prove that Jesus was fully aware of being instrumental in effecting the reign of God and of making it a present reality among men. The reign of God, or His Kingdom in other words, was an accomplished fact in His actual life and work.

Now if Jesus was conscious that His own ministry was a real factor in the arrival of the divine reign upon earth, He was equally aware that His disciples and others (some, perhaps, like the scribe to whom He said "You are not far from the Kingdom of God") had also their indispensable part in the same result. Here we seem to reach the core of the creative thought of Christ. No thinker, no teacher ever laid such stress upon adventure, achievement, "agony of love till now not felt." We have recalled some of those persons in the Gospels who did not wait quietly till He should, perchance, take notice of them, but who pressed their suit upon Him, refusing to be refused, as e.g., Bartimaeus, the Syro-Phenician woman, and the woman who touched the tassel of His robe. In every case He welcomed their importunity.

Thus it is in keeping with this impassioned line of thought or imagination that two such parables as those of the traveller at midnight, and the importunate widow, were spoken to the end that men ought always to pray and not to lose heart. The truth of the first parable, that of the man who

came at midnight asking three loaves from his friend, is that if even a man with so many reasons for being unfriendly, the late hour, the door closed, the children asleep, is won by sheer persistence, in the face of opposing motives, to rise and give as many loaves as the other required, how *much more* will God incline His ear to the urgent and prolonged cry of His children. And the truth of the second is that if even an unrighteous judge can be moved by the continued coming of the widow beseeching him to do her justice, and protect her from the attacks of her enemy, much more will God see justice done to His chosen ones who cry to Him day and night. The stress in all such teaching is upon a faith that is resolute enough to do something—actually to achieve God's will in one's own life in the world. By crying day and night, by asking, seeking, knocking at the door though it seems barred against them, men have it in them to possess the will of God, and make His realm their own.

At the beginning we found Jesus counselling men to do what they could and wait for God,

biding His time; now at the last we find Jesus speaking of God as waiting for men, looking out for the productive virtue of their faith. Jesus exulted in the faith that could move mountains, and in Him "Who by His power setteth the mountains fast." "Nothing," He said, "would be impossible for you." For God is so much the Father of men that He makes room for the achievement of their passion and their prayer. Why does God thus depend upon men, and set free His power in answer to their cry? Could He not Himself move the mountains? Could He not with a single stroke remove the pain and sorrow of the world? It is not God's way, nor is it His wisdom or His will. God is no mere omnipotence. Being Father, being love as He is He has always sought expression, and will find it in this world only from within the soul; and since the soul is never so much itself as in the white heat of prayer of which Jesus spoke, from within the soul that rises to the uttermost of its activity. Is it not this that God has sought and seeks, His other in the soul that presses up to the pitch of its capacity, and by striving prolonged and

free does finally prevail? And thus is redeeming love, which is the ultimate power, released among men through man.

And this, undoubtedly, is the main truth—the transformation of the impossible into the possible or real—of the life and death of Jesus. What was achieved by beauty of thought and language in the parables was achieved primarily by beauty of life and action in the ordinary world. That is why Jesus has proved Himself to be the greatest inspiration ever received by life, and so by Art in all its forms. Art has been unable to forget Him. He has haunted the memory as He has held the mastership of the highest Art of the modern world. We have seen how, at the urgent cry of this suppliant and that, Jesus liberated the power that was in Him, so that it flowed out in tides of healing and of hope, refreshing the will, restoring the soul. And as men strove with Him and prevailed, so He Himself strove with God, offering up "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard for His godly fear." That passage from the Epistle to

the Hebrews is a revealing glimpse into the secret of Gethsemane where Jesus entered at the last and fell upon the ground and prayed that "if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me." Here, truly, is no mere quiet waiting upon God, no mere submission or surrender or the like, but rather tension, a will bent and spent upon achievement, an effort, a striving, an agony of the whole impassioned spirit, such that, as one old tradition puts it, "His sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." It is the most revealing moment in the history of the soul.

There is an etching of Rembrandt's which pierces the heart, because of its insight into this creative moment of the agony in the garden. The thought of Jesus, the days of His ministry among men, His life as a whole, were gathered up in that moment; and by means of it and its achievement, its "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt," the Cross is what it is, and stands at the core of Art and Religion alike. Finally, there is one further point to which some brief allusion must needs be made in order to

show that what we have described as the finishing touch in the thought of Jesus and His practice is equally there in the grace or beauty of His speech. We are told in a recent volume* that "the intellectual and æsthetic tradition of Europe looks back to Athens, not to Galilee; and no amount of special pleading will make it plausible to maintain that Science, Philosophy or Art owe as much to Jesus as to Hippocrates, Plato or Praxiteles." Then why, it may be asked, is there a deeper beauty to be found in the great works of Art in modern Europe than can be found in the Art of ancient Greece?

It is *not* special pleading to say that in all that concerns this deeper beauty Art owes far more to Jesus than to the sculptors of Greece, and that Philosophy, too, owes more to Him than to Plato by virtue of the profound vision of the divine reality and the divine order or harmony which Jesus has bequeathed, and which still haunts, as it has vastly enriched, the Art and thinking of the modern world. Here, as before, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." Theologians

* *Reality* by B. H. Streeter, p. 201.

instead of making such sweeping statements should strive to appreciate the masterpieces of Art inspired by Jesus, and so, perchance, simplify and adorn the often dull and colourless intellectualism of their creeds. For the intellect even with all its science will never of itself make the Christ intelligible to men, far less wonderful with the wonder of Reality itself, without the aid of poetry, painting, music, and that increased sensibility for nature and life which is one of the supreme gifts of Jesus to mankind.

Now the beauty or grace of the language of our Lord shows that like the Hebrew prophets He was conscious of using poetry and not prose as His main medium of expression. And we cannot but think that the vivid and pictorial style in which He expressed His intimate and luminous thought of God, and of the soul of man, was not improvised on occasion or by the way, but, being instinct with the poet's sense of the meaning and the value of words, was composed in those quiet places among the hills and other solitudes to which He was wont to withdraw by Himself alone. It has been finely shown of late by a highly

accomplished scholar* that the form of His language was fashioned after the model of the chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry, namely parallelism, of which there are three aspects, synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. Synonymous parallelism is a correspondence in idea between the two lines of a couplet, the second line strengthening, and as it were, re-echoing the sense of the first in equal though different terms, producing "an effect at once grateful to the ear and satisfying to the mind." As e.g. :

"There is nothing hid that shall not be made manifest,
Nor secret that shall not come to light,"

or

"If any man wisheth to come after Me, let him deny himself,
And let him take up his cross, and follow Me."

or

"Suffer the little children,
And forbid them not to come unto Me."

It occurs frequently in the Fourth Gospel, as e.g.:

"He that cometh to Me shall never hunger,
And he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

or

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me;
And let him drink that believeth on Me."

**The Poetry of Our Lord*, by the Rev. C. F. Burney, M.A., D.Litt. which the reader is asked to consult.

or

" If any man serve Me, let him follow Me ;
And where I am, there shall My servant be."

Secondly, our Lord's teaching, like that of the Old Testament authors of the Wisdom literature is often expressed in sharply marked antitheses, in antithetic parallelism fashioned, as before, in " balancing couplets." As e.g. :

" Every good tree bringeth forth good fruits,
But the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruits."

" That which is born of the flesh is flesh,
And that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

Among other forms of antithesis there is one in which " the contrast is obtained by simple inversion of terms in the parallel clauses." As e.g.:

" He that findeth his life shall lose it ;
And he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."

" Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled ;
And whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted."

It is suggestive to find that in the Fourth Gospel antithetic parallelism is very frequent, taking the same form as in the other gospels, and that here is a " characteristic turn of expression " which makes " a bond of connection between the simple teaching " of these gospels,

and the more reflective teaching of the Fourth. As e.g. :

" Ye worship that which ye know not ;
We worship that which we know."

" Moses gave you not the bread from heaven ;
My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

" The thief comes not but that . . . he may destroy ;
I have come that they may have life," etc.

" The poor ye have always with you ;
Me ye have not always."

The sharp antithesis in Matthew and John is destroyed in Mark by the addition after the first line, " and whensoever ye will ye can do them good "—an unnecessary explanation of the meaning of that line.

" In Me ye have peace ;
In the world ye have tribulation."

Thirdly, another feature in the form of the speech of Jesus is synthetic or constructive parallelism in which " the second line of a couplet neither repeats nor contrasts with the sense of the first, but the sense flows on continuously, much as in prose." The second line in sense completes the first, and in form the two lines balance one another.

As e.g. :

" They make broad their phylacteries,
And enlarge their fringes,
And love the chief place at the feasts,
And the chief seats in the synagogues,
And the salutations in the market-places,
And to be called of men, Rabbi,
But be not ye called Rabbi,
For one is your teacher,
And all ye are brethren.
And call no man your father on earth ;
For One is your Father, the heavenly.
Neither be ye called masters ;
For One is your Master, even Christ."

Other examples are found in Luke xii. 49-51, and John viii. 44. The name of *Step-Parallelism* is given to a form of parallelism " somewhat freely used by our Lord, in which a second line takes up a thought contained in the first line, and repeating it, makes it as it were a step upwards for the development of a further thought, which is commonly the climax of the whole. Thus the parallelism is partly synonymous and partly synthetic." As e.g. :

" He that receiveth this child in My name receiveth Me ;
And he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me."

cf. Matt. x. 40 ; Luke x. 16 ; John xiii. 20, and many other examples, especially in the Fourth Gospel.

Again, it is pointed out that there is a close relation between parallelism and rhythm, and in His use of rhythm our Lord shows, as before, His familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures alike in form and content. Perfect rhythmical regularity is not to be expected—"any more than in the oracles of the Old Testament prophets"—throughout lengthy passages, but is found rather in short passages, "with occasional irregularities."

A fine example is exhibited in the Lord's Prayer as given in Matt. vi. 9-13, which is, in fact, "a little poem or hymn consisting of two four-beat tristichs."

Our Fáther in heáven,	hállowed be Thy náme
Thy Kíngdom cóme ;	Thy wíll be dóne,
As in the heávens,	só on eárth,
Our daíly bread	gíve us to-dáy ;
And forgíve us our débts	as we forgíve our débtors ;
And leád us not into temptátion	but delíver us from évil.

Was it accidental, it is asked, "that our Lord so composed it, or did He intentionally employ

art in composition as an aid to memory? Surely the latter conclusion is correct." If, as one may add, the art was employed not merely to aid the memory, but also to express the inherent beauty of the thought or emotion which issued in such a hymn.

Another example, one of many, may be given:

" Ásk, and it shall be gíven you;
Seék, and ye shall fínd;
Knóck, and it shall be ópened to you.

For every ásker receíveth;
And the seéker fíndeth;
And to the knócker it shall be ópened."

Jesus' commission to Peter, peculiar to Matthew, is cast in this rhythm, and falls into tristichs, and the reply sent to St. John Baptist is set in the same rhythm. Further, it is found in several passages in the Fourth Gospel.

As for three-beat rhythm it is " fairly frequent " in the Synoptic Gospels, e.g., in the Beatitudes, and in the following examples:

" To the fóxes thére are hóles,
To the bírds of the heáven nésts;
But to the Són of Mán there is nót
Whére He may láy His heád."

" Whoso pútteth his hánd to the ploúgh,
And túrneth his gáze to the reár,
Is not fít for the kíngdom of Gód.

" If the blínd leád the blínd,
Bóth shall fáll into the dítch."

The same three-beat rhythm is not infrequent in the Fourth Gospel :

" Í am the breád of life ;
He that cómeth to Mé shall not húnger,
And he that beliéveth shall not thírst for éver."

" Í am the líght of the wórld ;
He that fólloweth Me shall not wálk in dárkness,
But shall háve the líght of lífe."

Again, it is asked if it is possible to trace among the sayings of our Lord, " any passages which seem to exhibit the characteristic rhythm of the Hebrew kīnā or dirge—a rhythm which was by no means confined to this particular form of poem, but was used more widely in poetry of an emotional type." The first example is found in Luke xiii. 23-27 where " the whole is not rhythmical, as a carefully elaborated poem would be, but there is a setting which structurally takes the form of prose, yet which by no means detracts from the solemn and mournful flow of the kīnā verses."

And one said to Him, Lord, are there few that shall
be saved? And He said to them,
Exért yoursélves to énter
By the nárrow gáte;
For mány (I say unto you) shall seék to énter,
And shall nót be áble.
Once the máster of the hoúse hath arísen,
And hath shút the door,
And ye begín to stánd withoút,
And to knóck the doór,
Saying, Lord, open to us,
And He shall answer and say to you,
Í have no knówledge óf you,
Whénce ye áre;
then shall ye begin to say;
We did éat and drínk befóre Thee,
And Thou didst téach in our streéts;
and, He shall say, I say unto you,
Í have no knówledge óf you,
Whénce ye áre;
Gét you awáy from Mé,
All ye wórkers of iníquity.

The following passages from Mark seem to be composed in this rhythm, Mark ii. 19-22= Matt. ix. 15-17=Luke v. 34-39, and Mark viii. 34-38=Matt. xvi. 24-27=Luke ix. 23-26. The Fourth Gospel supplies one striking example of this rhythm, John xvi. 20-22. In Matt. xxiii. 37-39, is found our Lord's lament over Jerusalem, and this seems to be cast into the form of a kīnā.

" Jerúsalem, Jerúsalem, that sláyeth the próphets
And stóneth her méssengers,
How mány tímes have I lónged
To gáther thy chíldren,
Like a hén that gáthereth her chícks
Beneáth her wíngs ;
Yet ye would not (falling like a sigh)
Behóld, there remaíneth to yoú
Your hoúse a desolátion,
I say unto you, ye shall not see Me until ye say,
Bléssed, He that cómeth in the náme of the
Lord." (cf. Luke xiii. 34, 35)

Finally, the writer in his last chapter shows that " Jesus seems not infrequently to have made use of rhyme." This is the more remarkable in view of the infrequency of this trait in the literary poetry of the Old Testament. " It is only in certain forms of Hebrew poetry such as popular folk-poetry and the Proverbs, etc., that rhyme is markedly characteristic ; and here its employment is evidently due to design. It may be held, then, that when rhyme occurs in our Lord's parallelistic teaching, it is equally true to design, and was adopted as likely to aid the memory of His hearers." Examples of His use of rhyme are found in the " Lord's Prayer," the Beatitudes, and in the great passage Matt. xi. 25-27=

Luke x. 21, 22 ; and also in John vi. 26, 27, x. 1 ff, the two latter being addressed "not to the Jews" (i.e. the Rabbinic authorities) but to the "common people" to whom the Synoptic discourses were addressed.

I have ventured in these last few pages to borrow what seemed to serve my purpose best, little out of much, to exhibit the poetry that wells up in the language of our Lord, and here beg to offer my gratitude to one who has shed such a wealth of illumination upon the various forms of His teaching.

CHAPTER VI

FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

PART I

THE personality of Jesus, as we have partially seen, is so passing rich and various that no one ever seems to succeed in bringing the whole into "the eye and prospect" of His thought. Like the painters who catch an aspect of the imagined face rather than the face—an unimaginable wealth of feature, form, expression—the writers present a side or section of the personality, every one essential, more or less, but none complete. This is no matter of surprise, it is rather what one might expect. But it is matter of surprise that amid the burning discussion of the day one side, and that the side of most significance, should ever fail to obtain its rightful place. Especially as it is the side which is conspicuous in the New Testament, and as represented there is so vastly more than a side as to be the centre and secret

of the whole. Paul with his unerring insight saw and set it in its place, of which there is no more striking proof than his favourite and familiar benediction, "The grace of the (or our) Lord Jesus Christ be with you." In every one of his epistles, supposing them all to be ascribed to him, either at the end, or beginning, or both, this phrase is found, or one but slightly different. And his benediction might, indeed, be said to be the burden of his thought. He is the apostle of grace. No word, theme, or thing is so often on his lips as χάρις. It is his message and its motive in one.

Paul was a marvel to himself. Something extraordinary, far beyond himself, which he describes as his having been caught up into paradise, and having heard unspeakable words (2 Cor. xii. 2-4), had come to pass in his experience comparable to Creation itself (2 Cor. iv. 6), and nothing could explain it save the grace of God, which, as he beautifully puts it, "He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." Henceforth he views his whole career, and interprets all its stages in the shining light of grace. God of His

good pleasure has separated him, and called him through His grace to reveal His Son in him, that he may preach Him among the Gentiles (Gal. i. 15, 16). And all through the Epistle to the Romans runs the same master-thought of the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ abounding to the many (Rom. v. 15) till in chap. viii. 31, 32, it mounts on wings of eloquence to the climax, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us who is against us? If God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, He shall certainly give us all things by His grace when He has given Him."*

χάρις, likewise, is the master-thought of his preaching, that which sends him forth and the others alike as ambassadors on behalf of Christ, "as though God were entreating by us, we entreat that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. v. 20, vi. 1). How moving their entreaty was, we hear or overhear in the pathos of a strain like this, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich,

* W. G. Rutherford's translation.

yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich " (2 Cor. viii. 9 ; cf. Phil. ii. 7). And in many another passage born of the same inspiration Paul shows how it is grace that does make rich, how, in other words, grace is as wide and deep as life ; it covers its entire course even from its " bed in hell," to the glorious inheritance of the saints in light. Grace is involved in the consecration or completeness of life as in its first approach and saving appeal. " Through Jesus Christ we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God " (Rom. v. 2). Grace is the abounding spirit of God in Christ which issues not only in repentance but in perfection. " By grace have ye been saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God. For we are His workmanship (ποίημα, poem) created in Christ Jesus for good works." " This is the will of God, even your sanctification," which means the process of making or becoming ἅγιος, set apart, holy, like Christ (Eph. ii. 10 ; 1 Thess. iv. 3).

It would not be suitable here to discuss the

problem of the relation between Paul and Jesus, but, surely, in what we have culled from the evangel of Paul it is easy to find both dependence on and continuity with the creative Evangel of Jesus. No one, indeed, before or since possessed himself, or was possessed more fully of the mind of Christ. Truly, it had pleased God to reveal His Son *in* him. Deep down in his heart's core grace had come in a creative form and made its dwelling there, so that Paul was "no longer I, but Christ that liveth in me." Grace and Christ were not only interchangeable terms, but interchangeable realities woven together like the strands of a cord in his life and faith; and, therefore, among the contrasts to be found between Christ and Paul, and even their differences it is essential to keep in view their profound unity of spirit. Such a unity is congruous with difference. For Paul, dependent as he was, was no mere echo, no mere imitation of his Lord, but one who through his own experience and the characteristic needs and yearnings and adventures of his mighty soul fought and found his way to a faith which was his own—"the faith which is in

the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. ii. 20). Revelation never means the contraction far less the suppression of the soul, but always its expansion, and intense activity by which it grasps anew and for itself the living word and will of God. And nothing is more sure in all the work and witness of Paul than his own creative and impassioned insight into the mind of Christ.

In passing to the Fourth Gospel we pass to a system, although far more than a system, of thought which is likewise interfused with personal experience and which has its centre in the same enthralling Person whose fullness (πλήρωμα) is as real to the author as to Paul. It consists essentially in grace. "Of His fullness we all received, and grace for grace" (i. 16) which means grace succeeding grace perpetually, i.e., the richest abundance of grace. The verse is connected with verse 14 where it is said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full (πλήρης) of grace and truth," and here as there the emphasis falls on grace. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus

Christ" (i. 17). It is the same contrast as Paul draws in Rom. vi. 14, where he says, "Ye are not under law, but under grace." Grace is the soul of the new dispensation. While the soul of the old is the law which dictates and demands, that of the Gospel lies in the grace which attracts, constrains, communicates. And that is the final truth of things, the fullness of the revelation of God, as compared with the law which was but a preparation, "a shadow of good things to come." It is enough here to remark the profound concord of experience and phrase betwixt Paul and the Fourth Evangelist.

In the Gospel of Luke we meet with a sentence of which the Johannine "full of grace and truth" might be said to be a recollection, or, perhaps, a deeper recollection of the same fact. "And the child grew, and waxed strong, being full of wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him" (ii. 40). It is significant that in the same Gospel, in the first record of His preaching, the thing that is singled out as its special note and character is its grace, that being the spirit of the Person or the Preacher "poured into His lips," and on

His hearers ; "And all bare Him witness and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth." And at the end of the 19th chapter we are told that "all the people hung upon Him listening." It is not too much to say of the Gospel of Luke that every page bears witness to something of the same thing. "Grace" always carries with it the idea of charm, or of that inner beauty to which charm belongs. There is a type of beauty which is without charm, but charm is always there where grace is. Grace is the beauty blent with charm which attracts and appeals to the heart of man, and touches it now to tears and now to wonder and belief. "For no tongue can tell the power of a soul that strives to live in an atmosphere of beauty, and is actively beautiful in itself."

Although the Gospels of Mark and Matthew do not describe His preaching at Nazareth or anywhere else as "words of grace," they are at one with Luke, and even go beyond him in recording the glad amazement of the hearers in Mk. vi. 2 and Matt. xiii. 54, as e.g., on the occasion of His preaching in the synagogue (Mk. i. 22) and again

at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 28) and elsewhere, and they both make a point of the impression of His wisdom (σοφία) and His powers (δυνάμεις). If, also, they do not include the passage from Isaiah (lxi. 1, 2 ; Luke iv. 18, 19) still one may find it embedded in Matt. xi. 5, where, in the roll of δυνάμεις which Jesus sends to the prisoner John by way of answer to his doubt, He gives the crowning place to the preaching of glad tidings to the poor (cf. Matt. xii. 17-21). It is worth observing in view of the matter before us that in the passage as quoted by the evangelists there is no reference "to the day of vengeance of our God," Jesus evidently refusing to identify Himself, His message and mission with the ancient threat. It was not of the substance of His "words of grace" or of His "powers," or congenial to the Spirit of the Lord which was upon Him. One may gather that for a mind brooding upon the axe, the fan, the fire, such an answer charged with grace, with the beauty that is full of charm, would not avail. Nevertheless, it was the answer appropriate to the Christ ; it

announced the Messianic age, the acceptable year, or the year of the grace of the Lord. And conscious, surely, of all it meant to others, as well as to Himself, He added the impressive words, "And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

Now, of this sentence it has been said in a volume* written by a man of great sincerity that "there is not a word in the Gospel which reveals more clearly the solitary place of Jesus. It stands on the same plane with those wonderful utterances already considered in which He speaks of confessing and denying Him before men, of hating father and mother, son and daughter for His sake. . . . It makes the blessedness of men depend upon a right relation to Himself; happy with the rare and high happiness on which God congratulates man is he who is not at fault about Jesus but takes Him for all that in His own consciousness He is. That Jesus in this informal utterance claims to be the Christ is unquestionable; or if 'claims' is an aggressive word we can only correct it by saying that He speaks as

* *Jesus and the Gospel*, James Denney, pp. 259, 260, etc.

the Christ. . . . By taking this simple sentence in its simplicity we do not hesitate to say of it, as of Matt. x. 32, that there is nothing in the Fourth Gospel which transcends it. The attitude which it so calmly and so sovereignly assumes to men, the attitude which it so calmly and sovereignly demands from men—even from men so great as John the Baptist—is precisely the attitude of Christians to their Lord in the most 'Christian' parts of the New Testament. It is not they who gratuitously, and under mistaken ideas of what He is, put Him into a place which no human being ought to give to another; but He Himself from the very beginning spontaneously assumes this place as His."

That is a typical passage, one of many from an able book, the feature of which, and much of its force, lie in its insistence on the solitary place of Jesus. It is the place, as the author loves to repeat, which is not merely assigned Him by the faith of the Church, but from the first assumed and asserted by Jesus Himself. It is the place, the cathedra, as it were, from which He speaks, from which He proclaims Himself and His sovereign

demands upon the obedience and loyalty of men. And like His place His consciousness of self is "solitary, incomparable, incommunicable." Place and person, person and place are all of one, and in the faith of the Church "He is set"—and set "unquestionably"—as the author believes, "on the side of reality which we call Divine, and which confronts man." There is no Christianity except through a particular attitude of the soul to Jesus, and that attitude is demanded at every point, in every relation and in every mode, tacit and explicit by Jesus Himself.

In quoting parts of any argument one always runs the risk of misquoting the whole, and one shrinks from this and would fain avoid it in regard to a departed writer of such manifest sincerity and power as the author of the work before us. But amid all his insistence on the solitary Person and His solitary place of authority, one is in doubt if there is any room at all for that element or spirit of grace from which the idea of charm is never absent, which the New Testament singles out in Jesus and in His word and way. One would not deny that there is an important truth in the line

which the author takes. One would not attempt in the unwarranted fashion of those whom he criticizes to explain away the significance of Jesus and His attitude to men which, rightly understood, is vital to the Gospel. One is thankful for much in the book bearing on this point which required to be said or said again.

But the question recurs, is the significance of Jesus and of His attitude as fully and fairly represented as it might be? One cannot truly say that it is. One feels as if the representation were almost wholly emptied of the grace which is the glory of Jesus and the Gospel. No writer, one would suppose, could be less oblivious of grace than the writer of this book, and yet as one turns its forceful pages one is impressed by the lack of the one thing that makes all the difference. The point at which one parts from him is not so much, perhaps, in what he says as in what he leaves unsaid. What he leaves unsaid, or even unsuggested is what may be called the atmosphere of the whole, that something which is deeply interfused through all the "good news" and the personality of the Christ, and which is more unique than all

the features of uniqueness he describes. It is really the secret of the uniqueness of both, that which pervades the solitary person and the solitary place, but which is essentially communicable, self-diffusive, imparting itself as life in creation, " the gift of God."

The interfusion of grace, of beauty working by charm, of faith working by love, does not take from the solitary person or His place, but adds or provides that basis between Himself and others upon which the real thing can be given or communicated and the real thing received. And that, surely, is the essence of Jesus and His Gospel, and the point to be understood. It transfers the emphasis from the solitary to the social, from the unique to the universal, from the one as confronting man to the one as " in the midst " of men, from the claim to the communication, from the demand to the gift and the good news. It is a question of right emphasis which again is a question of right analysis of the elements contained within the comprehensive unity of " Jesus and the Gospel." Now in that analysis we come with the writer to a stage where Jesus

stands by Himself, asserts Himself, proclaims Himself and the conditions whose acceptance on the part of men sets them in that right attitude to Himself which constitutes their blessedness; where "it is not enough to say that He claims," but "rather assumes that He will obtain that martyr devotion to which only righteousness and God are entitled"; and "until we see this," he adds, "we do not see Jesus."

It may be admitted that to see "this" is to see a part or aspect of Jesus—necessary, in a sense, and not to be ignored—but emphatically it is not to see *Jesus*. For the last and highest side of all, and the open secret of the whole drops out of the analysis, and what we see, therefore, is more a dictator than a deliverer, and more a law than a gospel. The charm is gone, the beauty, the grace are gone. The atmosphere, or, indeed, the something more than atmosphere, the ethereal touch and tone are gone. To omit grace and all that it stands for is to omit that wonder-waking, expansive power or spirit which permeates His every utterance and act, His character and creed, His life and death, and which far more than aught

else is the supreme contribution of the Christ to the life of the world.

Grace is the one word which apprehends, as it seems also fully to express the Spirit of Jesus, that supreme expansion of the life within Him which affected everything He touched and taught, so that His sympathy and severity, His majesty and mercy, courage and tenderness, authority and humility, truth and holiness are but different aspects or activities of one and the same inner life, and all absorbed in the single task of revelation and redemption. The task of grace is simply grace, the drawing of God and man together into a union of holy life, and holy love spontaneous and free. Grace is love grace is holiness, not apart but fused together in that wonderful charm or influence by which the ends of God are satisfied, and the ends of man are realized. Where grace is, therefore, there is no " confronting " man save only to " create " him anew through his own free choice, nor any isolation from man save only the more effectually to seek him and draw him on to perfection.

In grace there is no dictation or demand but

only to define the path of blessedness and plant man thereon, nor any self-assertion save only in the way of very self-devotion to the will of God. Hence we do not *see Jesus* so long as our eyes are fixed upon the solitary person standing in the solitary place, but only as we see Him stooping from His solitude, and becoming in and through His solitude the beloved Son, and the Saviour of the world. His solitude fraught with grace is all of a piece with service, His difference with unity. As the apostle strives to express it in the *Ephesians*, and the full force of his language is only found there. "But God . . . quickened us together (or made us live together, συνεζωοποίησε with Christ, (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up (συνήγειρεν) with Him and made us to sit with Him (συνεκάθισεν) in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus; for by grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 4-10).

To see Jesus, therefore, in the sense in which

the New Testament sees Him is to see Him arrayed in the exceeding riches of His grace, going about His Father's business of communicating life, and giving of His fullness to the need of men, the gift of God in person. But to say that this is what we see or may see, is not to be blind to the measure of truth in what is said about the solitary person and His place. For what makes Him solitary, and His place conspicuously alone, is just His fullness of grace, which, at the same time, is just that which makes Him the One whose touch is all-essential, and whose place is among men. From this point of view it is possible to speak of His "demand," but only as a mode of defining the "gift"; to speak of His "claim" but only as a way of declaring His authority, the soul of which is appeal, constraint (Mk. i. 17, 18; vi. 45; Matt. xi. 28), and great desire (Luke xxii. 15; Matt. xxiii, 37; Luke xiii, 34); and to speak of His self-proclamation in suffering and the cross, but only as His going on to die, and adorn His death with the same grace or charm as His inimitable life. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And all this so far from subtracting from the solitary person and His place only adds to both and justifies them. We are dealing with One whom in a real sense it is true to describe as solitary, as, indeed, the most lonely figure in history. He enters in by the narrow gate of utter independence. He is as fearless of the frown, as heedless of the favour of men. Far from seeking their advice or shrinking from their hate He goes often in the face of their traditions and of popular opinion and desire, working out His task with the clearness and the swiftness of necessity, and with a dignity no cunning can disturb, a devotion no hardship can destroy. Not that He is indifferent to their motions of friendship and of enmity. Thus He does not heedlessly or needlessly expose Himself to danger, but chooses on occasion to avoid it, learning by His own experience what He teaches others "to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." "Beware of men," He once exclaimed. At the same time He is utterly aloof from the ordinary pleas and covetings of men; "the prince of the world cometh and he hath nothing in Me." Again, "ye shall leave Me alone."

Truly, the world has never seen such a figure of independence, independence of thought, of judgment, of purpose carried to the last pitch of detachment and the power of God. "Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart." Now at the beginning when He is tempted to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and now at the end when He is besought to come down from the Cross, He grapples to His lonely calling and His lonely doom, inflexible, invincible as before, and conceding nothing and at no time to the tempter in any guise, He summons men to follow Him, and "agonize to enter by the narrow door."

"Get thee behind me, Satan"; "Abba, Father, Thy will be done." There is a giving up of nothing to the one, because there is a giving in of everything to the Other. It is independence rooted in dependence, pride rooted and grounded in prayer, aloneness in alliance, fortitude in faith, self-assertion in self-humiliation, aloofness in the love which passeth knowledge. In that unsearchable word, with its mingling of tears and rapture, the word with which He leaves the garden, and accepts the Cross, it is all profoundly

expressed : " Abba, Father, Thy will be done." *There* is the secret of the solitary person and His solitary place, and of this, also, which is greater and is the truth before us : the secret of the paradox by which the solitary person is the Saviour, and His solitary place the centre of the life and destiny of men. We do not see the highest we can see in Jesus while we only see Him in His solitude. We must see Him in that larger vision in which His solitude is but an aspect of His being, and is all that it is, like every other aspect, as the servant of His grace and truth. His solitude is only in virtue of the fullness of His grace, and, therefore, it is not His solitude but His fullness of spirit and life, which is charm, attraction, loveliness of attitude, that is supreme, and that makes Him and His gospel what they are. We do not see Jesus till we see Him clothed upon with the universal grace which draws Him to the world and the world to Him, through which God shines in the hearts of men to give " the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In other words, the most lonely and apart of persons is the

most divinely beautiful, the most divinely winsome person known to men, so full of a nameless charm as to be the first to achieve and the last to keep the name of the friend of publicans and sinners. It is grace making isolation the instrument of love, independence the organ of compassion, difference the bond of unity, or doing this, besides, which adds another touch of wonder.

The power residing in Jesus and " proceeding from Him " (Mk. v. 30 ; Luke viii. 46) is the power of " saying with a word " (Mt. viii. 8), the power of leadership, the power of spirit ; so that at one time the people are crowding round Him with their sick (Mk. vi. 53-56) ; at another are fain to take Him by force and make Him king (John vi. 15) ; and at another are leaving Him alone self-driven from His presence (John viii. 9 ; cf. Luke iv. 30)—such power as has always been to men the acme of temptation. Never is it used by Him to grasp at selfish privilege, or for the sake of self-parade, and the glory of this world, but always and without exception to bestow unselfish service and in renouncement of the world. It never abandons

its unearthly "way" of charm. "This temperance in the use of supernatural power is the masterpiece of Christ." It is even more than His masterpiece, it is Himself. Once again it is grace transforming the attitude of solitude into one of sympathy so deep and exquisite that they of old time saw the prophecy fulfilled, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases" and we to-day can see in flesh and blood the picture of the Good Samaritan. It is grace transforming its opposite into a medium of unity.

If, then, the "face of Jesus" is a vision of charm gleaming through a veil of solitude, of winsome Saviourhood emerging from seclusion, a vision of grace in its divine sufficiency by virtue of which the New Testament is all aglow with a light that never was on land or sea, then, surely, it is wrong analysis and wrong emphasis alike, to exhibit the Christ as first and chiefly a solitary person set in a solitary place, wrapped in an "incommunicable" consciousness of self, confronting men, impressing His demands upon them, and assuming He will obtain their martyr obedience. That may be a side,

but it is not the centre of His personality, and we do not see the side until we see the centre. By itself it is but a fragment, and such a fragment as, had it been the whole, neither gospels nor epistles would have been the books they are, with their wealth of atmosphere, irradiance, life. They share in the personality they present, and so belong to the sacred Canon. They are inspired by His Spirit, which far from being isolated and "incommunicable," they being witness, is self-communicative in the measure of the fullness of His grace. He enthralls rather than enforces, He draws rather than drives. Self-communication is of the nature of personality as it is of grace, so that when grace and personality are supreme, as *they are*, in Jesus, we must allow that what distinguishes Him is not what divides Him from, but what unites Him with humanity. He is what He is—the Christ—not as confronting men but as akin to men, full of charm, appeal, redeeming love.

It is, surely, from this point of view we must needs interpret the Messianic consciousness of Jesus and all those words which, explained from

any other, are too aggressive and severe to be described as " words of grace." More than any other words they are instinct with personality. " The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life." Their teaching lies as much in their tone as in their truth. They are, indeed, not so much statements of principle as expressions of personality, the principle in their case being so wholly merged in personality. It is immanent in them and they are what they are as words not only of truth, but of grace and truth. It must make a difference in their interpretation when the supreme thing about them is remembered, the immanence of personality, the interfusion of grace without which they do not form a Gospel at all. A Gospel, or as we know but one Gospel, the Gospel, is not simply " a new teaching " and nothing more, but essentially a new teaching that is also an old teaching, with all the up-gathered might of personal life, personal charm, personal conviction adorning and informing it. It is the sum of life-sayings in which He who breathes them bestows Himself on men. Himself is in them, hence their meaning and their motive,

their beauty and their truth, and their incomparable soul-renewing virtue age after age. Such terms, accordingly, as "claim," "demand," "authority" as used to describe the Gospel, are far from true unless they be understood in the light of the Person who communicates *before* He claims and gives *before* He demands, and whose authority is illumination more than proclamation, and attraction more than ordinance. Herein lies the distinction of what we know as the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII

FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

PART II

WHAT is this rare growth of personality, this strange affluence of spirit stealing, like some strain of music, or scene of beauty on the soul so that forthwith the soul begins to know itself, and cherish thoughts, ideals, longings scarcely felt or known before. Something fine and rare beyond compare, fashioned of the gifts of God, and fraught with such a mastery that at its call the soul awakes and hastens to the newness that awaits it. "The Master is here and calleth thee; and she, when she heard it arose quickly and went unto Him." And He saith unto them, "Follow Me. . . . And they straightway left their nets and followed Him."

It is inspiration. It finds the soul beset with fear, it leaves the soul beset with faith; it finds the soul confused with doubt, it leaves the soul arrayed in hope, it finds the soul bereft of love,

it leaves the soul endued with love and life. I am unable to describe in befitting phrase the beauty, wonder, charm of this spirit or genius of inspiration, this power of the creative in Christ by which He enters into souls and becomes their life. The great word of the New Testament is the only word that avails to express it. It is grace. Grace is not merely this theme or that theme of His teaching or even this tone or that tone of His teaching, but essentially the creative thrill, the "Follow Me," the "Go, and do thou likewise," the "Lazarus, come forth," of His word and presence. Grace is power, but power solely as the minister of its own purpose. Grace is authority, none like it, but wholly bent and spent on more and fuller life. Even when it must destroy it is only that it may fulfil; its decree of death is but a counsel of life. "If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off; it is good for thee to *enter into life* maimed rather than having two hands to go into Gehenna" (Mk. ix. 43). Grace is the reality of the New Testament, that which makes it new once and for all and for ever, which impels its writers to write, which rivets their gaze upon

the Christ, and which they all see in Him as central and as shaping and informing every word and act. Grace is that, also, which by its feeling, attraction, charm, abounding pathos has caused the painters to paint, the musicians to sing, the builders to construct their sanctuaries and shrines.

What they behold is not only genius of intellect as in a Plato, else they would not adore Him as they do, nor only strength of moral character as in a Moses, else they would not cleave to Him as they do, nor only the enthusiasm of humanity as in a Buddha, else they would not worship Him as they do, nor only capacity of leadership as in a Cæsar, else they would not count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him. It is something far more than any or all of these great endowments of mankind. We are expressly told that on His coming up out of the Jordan " He saw the heavens rent asunder and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him " ; symbolic language which suggests how, or in what manner, He is the unrivalled being that He is in the New Testament and in the experience of God and man. A

novel sort of supremacy, authority, mastership ! Since the world began was it ever heard of power being likened to a mother-dove ? It seems like contradiction, but once He spoke of being " harmless as doves," and not only is the air of harmlessness true of His Spirit, but that also which the poet describes as " the brooding of the gentle dove." The Spirit descended like a dove and abode upon Him. The image is that of a mother-dove brooding or hovering over her young, and in this connection it is suggestive to find two other passages in which a kindred image is used, and the divine life compared to the action of a parent-bird,

> " As an eagle that stirreth up her (his) nest
> That fluttereth over her (his) young.

Here is a creature with power to soar and yet with patience to serve, a creature of the great spaces, and also of the homely nest beside her brood, imparting life and guidance for the " trackless way." " So Jevovah alone did lead him." In the New Testament occurs the other image of the mother-bird, which comes nearer to us and thrills us by its pathos.

> " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings "

to protect them from peril, and quicken the life-powers slumbering within. These three images of the parent-bird help us to appreciate that unfolding of the Spirit of God which arrests us in Jesus and is best defined by the phrase " full of grace and truth," thoroughly permeated, that is to say, with the real, the dove-like, mother-like, father-like, divine, that sufficient spirit of life which attracts, imparts, empowers.

If there is one thing in the New Testament which makes us feel that we are walking in a new world, it is the presence of this Spirit of life in Christ, this matchless air of self-forgetfulness with its charm, its virtue, its fire, going out of Him and going into men, redeeming them, and which is what is meant by grace in all its forms. It is the most original sight in history, the simple, unpretentious, undogmatic and yet wholly dynamic way in which He goes about among men, " not crying aloud or making His voice to be heard in the streets," holding back the secret of His own

Messiahship, withdrawing often to the solitudes alone, or with a few companions, and coming back betimes and using all His more than regal power, His power of life, of sympathy, of sanctity, of "removing mountains" among the most unknown, unlearned and reprobate of men, content to let His gospel win the world by the quiet dove-like brooding, the benign mother-like appeal and passion of His great heart. When He opens the roll in the synagogue and reads His commission, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He describes just the opposite of what His people looked for. They sought a Christ with ample show and glow of power proclaiming His predominance and "the day of vengeance of our God," not a Christ with the child in His arms and a Kingdom attuned to the child-spirit, and speaking in a voice of charm and full of the cry from heaven, which would have won them if they had only brought the hearing ear. "How often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye *would not.*"

In His tidings to the poor, the captives, the blind, the broken, in His acts of compassion by the

way, ineffable in reverence and tenderness, in His swiftness of service, His bending down and binding up the wounds of fallen humanity—in all this and more uplifted on the quiet, almost silent Cross, silent save for its eloquence of grace, we find the secret of the power of Christ for all time in and over the minds, imaginations, loves of men. He reigns because He loves to the uttermost of the Saviour's heart, and because He has breathed a new romance into the common lives of men, a new idealism, a new vision of

> "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> . . . dressed in living green."

Not because He proclaims Himself, or His own incomparable dignity, or claims a solitary place confronting men, which is not the truth of His title to reign, but because He comes to men in His Father's name and unbaffled, and unbroken even at the last, gives Himself, "full of grace and truth." If we are ever to get home to the Christ we must needs get home to this predominant grace pervading person, character, life and influence. It is the soul and centre of His consciousness of self. Messiahship is naught except

in terms of it. From the days of the Jordan to the days of the Cross it is the one uniting bond of word and deed, the breath of God breathing through the life and from the lip, His overshadowing creative, self-imparting Spirit "in fashion as a man." It is the one humanity in history that moves onwards, harmonious and one. It marches to the Eternal voice. Many-sided as it is, it is all the more profoundly one, one and many, many and one, in virtue of the grace that is the spirit and emanation of the whole. From this point of view it is not possible to say that there is a "higher gift than grace," or to describe grace more aptly than as "God's presence, and His very self and essence all-Divine." "Full of grace" means just that if it means anything at all.

If we observe the Baptism, e.g., that vital moment which determined the vocation of Jesus, to which some reference has already been made, the vision of the Spirit which broke upon Him as He prayed was significant of nothing less than His endowment with the power of God. "The Spirit whatever else is involved in it always includes the idea of power, and power in which

God is active." It was such that it could be said to bear the likeness of a dove, and, therefore, was not ordinary power as has been shown, but power replete with spiritual purpose. The voice that crowned the vision gave it utterance ; " Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased." It has often been explained that the words are drawn from Old Testament prophecy, two ideals found but never found together there (except but once, perhaps, Zech. ix. 9), being fused together here, both Messianic king and lowly servant of the Lord rising as one upon the consciousness of Christ, and revealing in their unity the truth of His endowment and His destiny. The point is that they not only applied to Him as ideals, but were already fulfilled in Him as realities. Manifestly a consciousness of selfhood with these as its own, living and moving and having its being in them, is a consciousness that must be described as " solitary," " incomparable," " alone."

But that is not the last to be said of it, nor was that the object of the vision and the voice. Their purpose in bringing home to Jesus the fact that the hopes and aspirations of the past were realized

in Him was that He might be the One divinely appointed Mediator of the truth that dwelt in Him. Their purpose was not only to invest Him with the truth as it was in Him, setting Him in a lonely place apart, but to invest Him with the grace by which He could and could not but impart the truth to others. It is one thing to think of the Christ as full of truth, and as, therefore, having lordship over men, demanding obedience, claiming surrender to His authority. It is another thing to think of Him as full of *grace* and truth, the truth by virtue of the grace behind it and before, rising from the note of claim to that of call, from the note of law to that of gospel, from the severity of the one to the charm of the other, with self-devotion always as its source and motive of appeal. Truth is one thing, grace and truth another. It is truth charged with the spiritual beauty which is the power of life. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

The Baptist perceived there was something deficient in his message which the message of the "mightier" would assuredly provide. And

nothing in the early record is more certain that what was absent from the one was present in the other. John and Jesus both came preaching repentance, but what in the mouth of the Baptist was the fiat of a law, in the mouth of the Christ was the faith of the Gospel. It was hurled forth by the one in the stern tones of the judge, whilst the Other gave it in the blessed accents of the Saviour. The one voice awed and terrified, the Other charmed and inspired. The one said, "Flee from the wrath to come," the Other said, "Come unto Me, and I will refresh you." The one remained aloof from men, lifting up his lonely witness in the wilderness, the Other went in and out of the dwellings of men, their Friend and Physician, "looking out" for sinners and eating with them. The different attitude lies in the difference between law and gospel, or between truth and "grace and truth." The deficiency of the one is changed into the sufficiency of the other. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." That is the Baptist's reading of the advent of Jesus. In the majestic "He," as he discerns, His heavenly message is

concentred and consists. It is not nor can be severed from the "He," nor is the "He" accidental to it. It is rather the necessity which makes the Gospel what it is. It is one thing to be conscious of the truth of moral ideas, another to be possessed of their power. And the Gospel is not merely a system of ideas which men may be aware of, but, essentially, the heavenly power which transmits itself in and through them and regenerates. It is "the power of God unto salvation." Hence it follows that what are called the demands of the Gospel, or His demands, claims, verilies, imperatives, severities are all to be understood in the light of the personality whence they come, and Whose spirit they are meant to convey. Not one of them but in its own way contains the whole personality. It is He, the whole incomparable Christ, who gives them their character, and the prevailing note of appeal rather than of assertion, of persuasion more than of precept, of life than law. The rigid law is changed into the free, spontaneous, exquisite, personal love of the Saviour. Decalogue has absolutely passed into Beatitude; the air of

prohibition into the air of promise and response; "ye are not under law, but under grace."

If that is the meaning of the "Baptism" it is no less that of the "Temptation." The later episode has the same lofty significance as the earlier, and cannot be understood without it. If Jesus was revealed to Himself at the Baptism, the next and necessary step for Him was to be *led up* of the Spirit into the wilderness and face the issues of the revelation there (cf. Mk. i. 12).

For if, as one may think, it had but dawned upon Him then—the sublime sense that the ends of the ages had come upon Him, and that the dreams of men and the purposes of heaven met in Him and were fulfilled—there would be the further need that such a sense or such a prescience should enter into full possession of itself, and choose its own appointed path. Though it is a graphic touch there is a hint of spiritual suggestion in saying that He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness. The secret of His Person had now to be construed in terms of His vocation. Vision must pass into venture, ecstasy into effort, rapture into wrestling. The message

of the heavens must become the ministry of the earth. What had been given was the Spirit of God in its ultimate forms, "My Son," "My Servant"; it had now to be striven for and sifted out just what these involved, and how they were to be accomplished in the world. The task of Jesus was to find the best and only way according to the will of God by which the heavenly ideals which were real to Him could be made real to men, and the Kingdom of heaven established among them; how to use the sacred fire which burned within Him so as to achieve their highest good, their blessedness, their joy.

"If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But this was no answer to His problem in the wilderness. It had regard to His gift of power, and pointed out a way by which it could be put to the use of Self and others. Facts so personal to Himself as that He hungered, and had compassion on the multitude that hungered, gave it the double force of a temptation which once He felt as such, He foiled, and sought another way to use His power. The use of it along the path of self-assertion and

material ascendency was not in keeping with the vision of His soul, nor did it answer to His heaven-born calling as the Son and Servant of the Lord. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"If Thou art the Son of God, cast Thyself down." But why, again, was this no answer to His quest, but only another tempting voice, another method of misuse? As before, it bore upon His sense of power, making the field of self-display as dazzling and deceptive as it could be, the summit of the national shrine, no less, from which with confidence unlimited in God, and in His might of miracle He could fling Himself upon a world of danger with impunity and proclaim Himself in the sight of man. It came upon wings of psalm and prophecy alike. "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee." "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple." It was a form of temptation to which, as one may imagine, one gifted with the highest gifts would of necessity be exposed. Was there aught which the darling of heaven need fear or

fail to do? Was not the arm of omnipotence His to call His own? Just here lay the peril of supernal power, that He might overstep its limits, profane its laws, presume upon its presence in or with Him, so tempting God. It was the temptation to overtrust, to a life of self-importance swathed in miracle which, as He discerned, was alien to His person and His work. Overtrust would come to overlordship: tempting God, presuming on God, would come to tyrannizing man, and Jesus would have none of it at all. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

"All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." Another prize presented to His consciousness of power, another imposing prospect of possession, another glittering realm brought within His grasp; and another snare, another make-believe, as He perceived. If He will not make irreverent demands of heaven, may He not attempt the alluring mastership of earth? If He will not try to force the hand of God, may He not accept the proffer of another? If He will not reign by presumption, might He not win by compromise! Instead of the power

of Deity, let it be the power of the prince of this world, let it be a league with evil instead of good. The repulse in this case was one of peculiar intensity. "Get thee hence, Satan."

These objects were all of them in keeping with a life of self-assertion, and all possible to one aware of great capacities and coveting personal ascendency. They were all ideals of ascendency centred in self, and were all rejected because they did not comply with the voice and vision of His soul; they were false alike to the truth of His mission and the grace of His person. It was a wholly different sort of ascendency that dawned on Jesus and became clear as light in the conflict of the time. It could never be found on any of the paths of self-display or self-desire. It was the ascendency of the Beloved Son and Servant, and that alone.

There the Baptism and Temptation met, the latter concluding what the former began. And after the Temptation "Jesus came into Galilee preaching," or, as Luke has it, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," which means that the revelation of the Jordan had passed

into the practical decision of Galilee. Before Galilee, the Jordan and the wilderness ; before the ministry, the personality tried and triumphant, in full possession of itself and its vocation. Otherwise Galilee had not been the Galilee of the Gospel ; His personality had not been present in the preaching, or His grace in the truth and the life of it. We are trying to grasp a personality whose every step was a step in a benign process of expansion and expression. Each step to the centre was equally a step to the circumference. Arriving at its Messianic title it must needs arrive at its Messianic task. Scaling the heights of the one, it must search the depths of the other. The whole personality moved as one amid its diversity ; its consciousness of self, its consciousness of God and of man were but itself in its activities. If the revelation of the Baptism was that of a Spirit which had never so revealed itself to any soul but One, placing that One upon a pinnacle which only seers had seen from afar, it brought responsibilities lofty as itself and all requiring effort and a life of sacrifice.

The newness of the revelation lay not only in its

loftiness, but also and profoundly in the fact that its loftiness could only be achieved by lowliness. It was the revelation of a personality summoned to supremacy and, at the same time, to the post and path of service. The difference between its ascendency and every other was that it centred in the Fatherly will of God and not in self. Instead of coming into Galilee as Jesus might possibly have done in the haughty exhibition of Himself, and in "the pride of life," He came *preaching*. The passion of parade couches at the door of power, but it did not rule over Him. Power grasps at greatness as its right, but in Him it appeared as duty, it came in fashion as a servant, clad in the beauty or the charm of self-forgetfulness, "full of grace and truth." And lo! this is the new creation of Christ, and the glory of history, of Religion, and of Art. Power withdrawn from self and sanctified to God and man; power emptied of presumption and filled with prayer, power absolutely won to holy love. If self-assertion is the way and wont of the power of this world, in Christ it was self-consecration. If it falls to tempting God and tyrannizing man, it

rose in Him to worship and redeeming work. If its passion is proclaiming self, in Christ it was that of communicating self. " The Son of Man came . . . to *give* His life a ransom for many." Power wholly merged and manifest in grace. So that when He came in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and when He came preaching, and setting His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem, what can we say but that He came as the gift and the glory of God ?

If it were possible to go with Him through Galilee or up to Jerusalem, and mark His preaching by the way, with its wealth of parable and of principle, one would bear Him witness as they did at Nazareth, and wonder at " His words of grace." " Words of grace " is a singularly apt appreciation of His preaching, of its nature, content and effect, its inborn thrill of inspiration, and the benign, enraptured spirit of the Preacher. Shakespeare speaks of one whose

> " plausive words
> He scattered not in ears but grafted them
> To grow there and to bear,"

Of His words, likewise, it might be said, that

He grafted them to grow there and to bear. They throbbed and heaved with the power of the inner life. Deep in them, inseparable from themselves, were acts and motives, tears and triumphs, eternity and time, the whole accepted will of God. A life, a death, a destiny were in them, whence the secret of their being once and always words of grace. One must repeat that it is not the root of the matter to speak of the sovereign legislative authority which breathes throughout the Sermon on the Mount, or to speak of Christ, represented there, as the "final Judge of men." There is authority in the words of Christ, but one cannot describe it barely as legislative unless one rejects the difference between law and grace. At the same time their authority is none the less the authority of law that it is the infinitely greater authority of grace. Law is in the Gospel, but the Gospel is more and other than law, and it is away from the point to refer to its authority as legislative. So one cannot name Him the final Judge unless one remembers that He is Saviour first and last, and Judge only as exercising a function of the Saviour, and fulfilling the Saviour's work.

The Judge is always the Saviour for the reason that the Saviour must always be the Judge, and hence the judgment of the Judge is co-operant with the saving of the Saviour, and has no other meaning in this connection. There is no word of judgment or any other in the mouth of Christ of which the principle does not hold, " I came not to destroy but to fulfil " ; no word of judgment that is not in its heart a word of grace. The " I say " of the " legislation " of the Sermon on the Mount and the " I say " of its final judgment are all in tone and in tune with every other " I say " of Jesus, and with the " I will " and the " I am " of the great invitation itself (Matt. xi. 20-24, 25-30).

Enough has now been said, perhaps, to show that it is wrong perspective to portray the Christ as a solitary person in a solitary place, wrapped in an incommunicable consciousness of self, with sovereign legislative authority proclaiming His demands, and daring men to disobey. As such He is simply another Law-giver, but not the Christ of history or Religion or Art ; He is the Christ of a theological creed, but not of the New Testa-

ment life ; He is the Christ who confronts, but not the Christ who communicates. The point of view is not true. Elsewhere in the same volume one finds the admission, " What is to be observed here is that we see already Him who had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and power baptizing His followers with the same." That is the point which one has tried to emphasize as the central fact of Jesus and the Gospel. " Baptizing His followers with the same " ; that, surely, is far more like the attitude than the other of which the writer says " He calmly and sovereignly assumes to men, and as calmly and sovereignly demands from men," and which " is precisely the attitude of Christians to their Lord in the most Christian parts of the New Testament."

One has no wish to deny the measure of truth in this interpretation, though it leaves out of account the far lovelier attitude in which He stands with melting heart and laden hands, full of grace and truth. It is certainly by virtue of His grace—that inexpressible harmony of beauty and reality, power and charm—that Jesus is what He is, and stands where He does, and is adored as

Lord and Christ. It is His spirit breathing through His speech and His silence and His whole being, and which has won its way into men of every clime and every kind in past and present. A Jewish writer of our day has claimed that nearly all that is true in the teaching of Jesus is anticipated in the best teaching of the Rabbis, and even His "I say unto you" may be, where it is historic, no more than the felt equivalent of "Thus saith the Lord"; but he admits that the originality of His teaching is chiefly in its general character, its spirit, its atmosphere. In any case the teaching of Jesus is more than its *disjecta membra*; it is a whole; it is a spirit. To this spirit it is easy to do less than justice through "cold analysis and dissection." Art, at least, has found in Him much more than a teacher like the Rabbis, and has caught and been captified by the Spirit of Jesus to which both the Christian and the Jewish writer do much less than justice. The writer who speaks of the "sweet reasonableness" of Christ shows a finer insight and judgment. "The conjunction of the three in Jesus—the method of inwardness, and the secret of self-renouncement,

working in and through this element of mildness —produced the total impression of his ἐπιείκεια, or sweet reasonableness; a total impression, ineffable and indescribable for the disciples, as also it was irresistible for them, but at which their descriptive words, words like this '*sweet reasonableness*' and like 'full of grace and truth' are thrown out and aimed. And this total stamp of grace and truth, this exquisite conjunction and balance in an element of mildness, of a method of inwardness perfectly handled, and a self-renouncement perfectly kept, was found in Jesus alone."

No one can deny that Matthew Arnold has laid his hand here on something that lies at the core of, and is inseparable from the person of Christ. This ἐπιεικεία is a true approximation to the Spirit which was in Him and which, even if it may defy description, one feels to be the original and creative thing in Christ. It is the discovery or the disclosure, or both, of the New Testament; the final word of Scripture; the finishing touch of the beauty and reality presented there; *the Gospel.* It is the source of the extraordinary attraction which the Christ exerts over men of

every age, and which crowns Him as both the most intelligible and the most adorable Being in history. It is the secret of His unity with God and His unity with man. It explains why men are bound to Him as the One who answers to their loftiest ideals, and is irresistible to their better selves. It is that which has evoked the Art of the Christian ages, because it has unveiled a deeper and more poignant beauty than before, and at the same time has uplifted men to feel, and to feel after it if haply they may find it.

The tribute which Art in all its various forms of architecture, sculpture, poetry, painting, music, has paid to Christ stands for a profound feeling and apprehension such as one often—perhaps too often—seeks for in vain in the theology and speculative thought of men. One often wonders why its testimony should be so little used in our colleges and elsewhere. What a mighty apologetic, if one might so describe it, lies for the most part unheeded in the vast fields of Art. Wherefore one has been at pains to discover what, supremely, in the Christ has made and makes Him so inspiring to human Art. For He has re-created Art. Since

ever He spoke to His disciples about the woman who came with her alabaster box of very precious ointment and poured the ointment on His head, Art, with its keen sensibilities, has borne unceasing witness to the inward manifest in the outward. " It is a beautiful thing she has done to me," He answered His followers indignant at the waste, and added " wheresoever *this Gospel* shall be preached . . . that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of as a memorial of her." The beauty of her inner life, her vision, became visible in the beautiful thing she did. It belonged to the Gospel, and the Gospel could be known by it. It was as if the Christ had laid His expansive and enchanting hand upon the inner and the outer life, making them all of one. His " words of grace " on this occasion have never slipped from the memory of men, or failed to arouse their imagination, or the impulse of Art within them. For it is no less a beautiful thing the masters of Art have done, showing in their outer works their inner life and its creative light, their adoration of the Spirit of Jesus. May we say that it is their way of saying that it is

no mere "demand" which Christ imposes on men standing *above* them, but an inspiration He gives to men standing *among* them whereby they "awake, and remember, and understand"? For He not only calls, but recalls; He revives ancestral memories, unlocks ancestral hopes. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

The presence of the Spirit "without measure" in Christ is the reason of His extraordinary sense of union with God, and with His Kingdom which "comes" as He comes, a gift like Himself of the Father's love; and of His union with man and man's so various life up to the pitch of His vicarious suffering and death. And, finally, it explains, or rather is but another word for, that amazing interfusion of Himself with all His words, that intermingling of His personality with all His thought, His motive, and His mastership, which issues in this, that His commands are invitations, His imperatives are promises, His severities the sanctities of sacrifice and service which are no less vital in the realm of Art than

in the realm of Religion. They are all "words of grace" by virtue of His Spirit, words wherein we may still hear the sound of His voice, and listen to His tidings across the years, and by which we may be drawn through the consummate charm and power of the same Spirit, His "without measure," into the Kingdom of beauty, truth, and love, which is the Kingdom of heaven.

In his recent *History of Greece* Professor Bury finely says, "We shall miss the meaning of the architectural monuments which began to rise under the direction and influence of Pericles if we do not grasp their historical motive. . . . It devolved upon the city (Athens) as a religious duty, to make good the injuries which the barbarian had inflicted upon the habitations of her gods, and fully to pay her debt of gratitude to heaven for the defeat of the Mede. . . . In this, above all, was the greatness of Pericles displayed, that he discerned the importance of performing it on a grand scale. He recognized that the city by ennobling the houses of her gods would ennoble herself; that she could express her own might and her ideals in no worthier way

than by the erection of beautiful temples." Bury records that the statue of Athena—a wooden statue covered with ivory and gold—was wrought by the Athenian sculptor of genius who has given his name to the plastic art of the Periclean age, Phidias ; and also that when he had completed this great statue he was invited to make the image for the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Of this statue of Zeus, Bury quotes these words of appreciation : "Let a man sick and weary in his soul, who has passed through many distresses and sorrows, whose pillow is unvisited by kindly sleep, stand in front of this image ; he will, I deem, forget all the terrors and troubles of human life. An Athenian had wrought, for one of the two great centres of Hellenic religion, the most sublime expression of the Greek ideal of godhead."*

In this example taken from a supreme period of the Art of Greece, one can see how the religious mind and motive were present in the temples and the statues which were essential to the life of Greece. And when one thinks of Jesus Christ,

* *A History of Greece*, J. B. Bury.

and how He has so vastly expanded and illumined the religious mind and motive of mankind one does not wonder that Art should come forth age after age and in one new phase after another seek to embody or express the new ideal of godhead and of manhood which were real in Himself. For no one ever spoke with the authority, attraction, charm of Christ, no one ever cast and kindled fire on the earth as He did, no one ever threw aside the veil of heaven, and let men see the purity, courage, humility God expects of them. No one ever quenched the light of low ideals as He, and brought into view the good and perfect will of God, no one ever planted such an ideal, such a reality upon the path of life and uttered Himself in words so full of grace and truth. "Deny thyself," "lose thy life," "take up thy cross." For, immediately after the "deny thyself," comes His "follow Me"; after His "lose thy life," His "for My sake." Into the sublime, imperious words there steals the heart-moving tenderness of the "Me," into the authority the appeal, into the sovereignty the Saviourhood, into the truth the grace with its

deep, sweet well of tears. And this is the glory of the Father, "full of grace and truth." This is He of whom the voice upon the Mount as at the Jordan spake and said, "This is my Beloved Son, hear ye Him."

CHAPTER VIII

LEONARDO, REMBRANDT, BEETHOVEN.

HAVING now considered and tried to suggest what it is in the Christ that has renewed the face of Art, and re-created the spirit of man, and opened up fresh regions for the exercise and achievement of his liberated powers, one may give one or two illustrations out of many to show how mightily the historic fact of an ideal life wrought in the minds of men.

There is no space to tell of the builders who have left a bewildering inheritance of inspired workmanship in the churches, great and small, which gradually arose wherever this creative fact became the faith, the creative faith, of societies or communities of men. Their crowning achievement in a large sense may be said to be the Gothic shrine, the Gothic cathedral alive and aloft with aspiration such as would fain have seen the heavens opened wide, and could not be satis-

fied with aught else than the soaring arch and the great windows with their many lights like the "Five Sisters" of York, and the noble elevation of the whole structure caught up as a prayer straining towards its object or ideal.

"There he goes to paint the Last Supper" said the people to each other, standing aside to watch and whisper while Leonardo da Vinci passed through the streets of Milan or Florence. Everyone knew, it has been said, that he had the most famous picture in his brain, that he was born to paint it, and initiate the High Renaissance. From Giotto onwards all the painters had been preparing for it. Florence itself had been preparing for it. It makes no difference that for centuries it has been a shadow on the wall; it is still the most famous painting in the world because it was the masterpiece of Leonardo. So great was the spell which he cast over his own age and other ages long after his own. To what can we ascribe this spell, this charm or influence, if not to the pure spiritual fire which burned within him, and which, all his life through, drove him hither and thither in search for truth and beauty;

and which, surely, may be said to bear some likeness to the Spirit of Christ Himself? No one, at least, was ever more intent upon, more in love with, reality than Leonardo, and one of his profound convictions was that if ever a man is to fulfil himself he must be in direct relation to the fact. The fact itself is sacred. "He was called a sceptic," as one has observed, "but it was only that he preferred reality itself to any tales about it; and his religion, his worship was the search for the very fact." That explains the spirit of adventure which possessed him, the passion for discovery which swept him on now in the sphere of science, and now in that of Art—the truth of the thing itself, the beauty of the thing itself, sought after, seen, insisted on with the ardour of a lover.

There are those, indeed, who doubt whether the artist or the scientist was the greater in Leonardo. For he enquired into the secrets of nature and her laws with the same abandon as he portrayed her beauties. An overmastering desire for knowledge impelled him to look for it everywhere, and all his days he found no rest, like the dove, for

the sole of his foot. Strange affinities attracted him, concords in nature like voices calling to each other from realms afar. It was no mere curiosity that drew him on, but the scientific instinct which aims at exact knowledge, and the laws which govern the whole. Thus he sang hymns to causation as if to God.

> " O marvellous necessity, that thou with supreme reason constrainest all efforts to be the direct results of their causes, and by a supreme and irrevocable law every natural action obeys thee by the shortest possible process."

And again,

> " O mighty process, what talent can avail to penetrate a nature such as thine ? What tongue will it be that can unfold so great a wonder ! Verily none. This it is that guides the human discourse to the considering of divine things."

To Leonardo, as someone has said, " causation meant the escape from caprice ; it meant a secure relation between man and all things in which man would gain power by knowledge, in which every increase in knowledge would reveal to him more and more of the supreme reason. There was no chain for him in cause and effect, no unthinking of the will of man. Rather by knowledge man

would discover his own will and know that it was the universal will. So man must never be afraid of knowledge." "There is in every man's vision the power of relating himself now and directly to reality by knowledge ; and in knowing other things he knows himself. By knowledge he gives up his own caprice for the universal will."

It was under the inspiration of convictions great as these that Leonardo pursued his adventure into the infinite, the "something evermore about to be." Finding shells and petrified water-plants and animals far up the sides of hills, and in valleys distant from the sea, he perceived that the face of the earth had been changing from immemorial time, and that a new science of the earth would emerge from the facts before him. Long before they were explored he had touched the margin of realms of knowledge wholly new. "The world," he used to say, "is full of countless possibilities of which yet there has been no experience" ; a saying which applied to both the worlds of his adventure which were one, that of truth, and that of beauty ; and in the

facts of the one and the forms of the other which he strove to penetrate he pressed after the perfection which he felt if he could not find.

Lord Leighton once said that "in his moody and fitful spirit unrestingly straining forward in the quest of some intangible new perfection, it was the same haunting sense of mysteries unsolved that led him now towards scientific prophecy, and now to the creation of a type of human beauty more subtle and complex than any the world had ever seen before." This is true if we remember that beneath the moods and fitfulness of his spirit there lay a placid strength and deep-set joy in the justice of Him whom he called the Prime Mover. His spirit, indeed, was a many-sided activity, on the one hand, urgent, restless and unsatisfied, yet on the other silent, steadfast, and serene in its grasp of the one eternal will.

Leonardo was born in 1452 in the little mountain village of Vincia, overlooking the vale of the Arno midway between Pisa and Florence; he died in France in 1519, worn out before his time. In his early years he displayed something of that strange versatility of genius which distinguished

him among his fellows. He played the lute, and as Vasari relates, "being by nature of an exalted imagination, and full of the most graceful vivacity, he sang to that instrument most divinely, improvising at the same time both the verses and the music." His father, however, observing that, of all his pursuits, drawing and modelling in clay were his chief attraction, sent him to the studio of his friend, Andrea del Verrochio, whose mastery of form and whose feeling for the twilight with its soft subdued effects were soon absorbed and soon surpassed by the genius of his pupil.

There is a tale which some ascribe to the invention of Vasari that the master on receiving a commission to paint the "Baptism of Christ" (it may be seen in Florence), asked his pupil Leonardo to work along with him, and that he painted one of the two angels kneeling on the bank so perfectly that Andrea no longer wished to touch colours, "for he was vexed because a child understood more than he." As the evidence for the story seems too slight, it must be left uncertain whether the angel, by far the more lovely of the two, who gazes on the sacred scene with countenance so

rapt and full of charm is from the hand of Leonardo. All critics are agreed about one early work which he seems to have painted when he was only seventeen, the narrow, long-shaped panel of the "Annunciation" in the Louvre, Paris; a most engaging picture in its grace, and air of devotion. This small work affords some idea of the painter's minute knowledge of nature, gained, like all his knowledge, as we have seen, by his eagerness for reality in little and in great; an eagerness that was nothing less than worship. "You can learn nothing from reality unless you adore it, and in adoring it he found his freedom."

It is quite true that his spontaneity, his freedom, his adoring quest for the last secret of things made him slow of working, and prevented him producing as much as he might have done. There are those who say they would gladly have done without the man of science if the artist had given himself more leisure to finish his designs. But we must take Leonardo as we find him, the man who, enthralled by the mystery, sought for the meaning of life; the man of almost universal genius to whom paint-

ing was so little the one thing needful that he only turned to it in the lull, as it were, of other occupations, and when it could express what nothing else could, " the highest spiritual through the highest material significance."

There is one detail in his picture of the " Annunciation " that tells of the pioneer of knowledge as well as of the master of Art, the wings of the angel, each of which, even to the tiny tufts of down beneath it, is wrought as by the hand of nature herself. The question of human flight was one that occupied him all his life, and, eager to invent some contrivance for the purpose, he studied with endless care the wings of birds, and the laws that govern their flight. " He who knows all can do all," said Leonardo; " I have only to *know*, and there shall be wings."

Now this was the man whose boundless capacity for truth, " the fact itself," was only equalled, if not excelled, by his spiritual, visionary sense of beauty, who gave himself up to paint the " Last Supper " in the Refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan. It is the single, supreme achievement of his sojourn in Milan, and, as

many think, the most famous painting in the world. As it exists to-day it is scarcely more than a relic of its former grandeur ; and yet in spite of all that time and other grievous things have done to destroy, enough remains to impress the mind with its immense original vitality and power. "The pure music of the painting remains," when the drama in its once glory of colour is now almost gone.

A member of the convent, one Matteo Bandello, describes the painter at work on the fresco ; how some days he would come at early dawn and work without a break till evening stayed his hand ; how other days he would come and stand before it with folded arms gazing at the various figures ; and how, at times, as if suddenly inspired, would hasten across the town in the glare of the sun and add a touch or two, and immediately return. Vasari says that he left the head of the Christ unfinished because he did not venture to render the heavenly dignity which ought to distinguish His face. It is recorded by another that he used to tremble with agitation when he wrought at the head of Jesus.

The whole work is great with the greatness of pure design, "of Giotto, Masaccio, and Piero della Francesca," as it has been said, and no less with the greatness of dramatic insight, and the inexpressible quality of atmosphere—a superlative monument of Art and Religion. It would seem as if all or most of all the powers central to Religion and Art had combined in this man to re-create the immortal scene in the Upper Room, or rather the immortal moment when Christ uttered the words, "One of you shall betray Me." For that is the moment so alive, personal, poignant which the painter strives to catch and represent in his fresco. The agitation caused by the words is wonderfully embodied in each of the twelve disciples, in his attitude of hand and face and form, and nothing could be more vivid than the contrast betwixt their distress and the calm, though mournful, serenity of Jesus. He sits in the centre alone, so that the eye is drawn thither at once, and the disciples are placed on either side in groups of three. Every member of these groups is different, the master whose genius delighted in taking pains gathering up this and

that trait of character in order to make a living individual of each.

Many writers, including Goethe, have attempted to describe with more or less detail the various groups and even the individuals one by one, detecting meanings, motives and the like in every gesture. But that is guesswork, and has little or nothing to do with the picture itself, which is a sublime imagining of the moment, the "very fact" as it was in and to the prescient mind of Christ, and the minds of the disciples at the Last Supper.

And one can recall but one other imagining comparable to this achievement, the "Christ at Emmaus," by Rembrandt, in which the painter, like Leonardo, catches the intense moment when having gone in to abide with "two of them" and sitting at meat with them "Jesus took bread and blessed and brake and gave to them, and their eyes were opened and they knew Him." The wonder, the worship, welling up in the eyes, the folded hands, and the attitude as a whole of the two disciples transported by the vision of their Lord alive and by their side constitute one of the

splendours of human Art, and speak with more than the eloquence of word or argument to every understanding heart.

And if it were possible, here, to tell of the numerous paintings and etchings of the mighty Rembrandt, one would have to pass in review a collection of scenes almost as varied as that of the gospels themselves. He seems to have wrought as swiftly as the other slowly, but both are swept onwards by the creative fact of Jesus, to express which is the inspiration of their Art. There was that in the fact of Jesus which stirred their imagination to its depths, and, surely, their very soul no less, for insight such as theirs means that they had gazed like seers on the reality until its wealth of beauty shone before them and they knew it.

The history of Art has volumes to tell of other masters great, or almost as great, as these, who paid their own consummate tribute to the same adorable reality, which lit their lives and kindled their imaginations, unveiling to them alike, as they were able to receive it, something more and ever more of the fashion of its loveliness. Leonardo

used to say that " whoever in discussion adduces authority uses not intellect but rather memory." He was just as opposed to authority as he was attracted by discovery ; and there is the variety of discovery too, in the works of the masters, each bringing his own gift, his own glowing activity of soul and sense, letting the reality dictate and adorn his work.

Thus the past with its tradition, and with what others had already accomplished, had perforce to yield to the present, and to his own sight or insight. Forgetting the things behind and straining after those before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ. The things of Christ were so vast, so varied, the Person so full of wonder, charm, and inspiration that he must needs translate his own impression into the design, the colour, the characterization which his own imagination found. Of this freedom which was in no sense caprice, but rather submission to or harmony with the universal will, Leonardo was a signal witness, and the other masters, too, were witnesses, personal conviction being awakened not by external authority, but by the intrinsic

appeal of Jesus to their own creative powers. And herein lies their priceless contribution both to Art and to Religion, wrung out as it was, and wrought out, by the power of the soul or spirit within them.

Everywhere there are the marks of spontaneous, original vision. They poured out their souls in the supreme effort to portray Him as He appeared to them in the ecstatic pages of the Gospels, and upon the heights and in the depths unfathomed of their own experience. It is, surely, only by remembering this that one can appreciate the difference of their point of view, the variety of their delineation, and the moving power with which their pictures speak from one age to another.

If one may enter, finally, a kindred realm of Art, one finds pre-eminently in the music of Beethoven the same unhindered spirit of freedom, the same consuming personal conviction, the same newness or creativeness of expression as in the achievements of Leonardo and Rembrandt. Like both of these he was "driven" by ideas and ideals lighted from the light of life, and all instinct with reality. "No great composer" it

has been said, " is better qualified to convince even the unmusical that music speaks and has a meaning." But while the painters gazed and gave the wealth the show had brought them, the musician listened as to a voice of many waters, and rendered what he heard and overheard. Thus there is storm in his symphonies and sonatas, the rush and sweep of ocean tides and tempests, and there is the stillness, too, which follows storm when

> " The holy time is quiet as a nun
> Breathless with adoration."

One may here recall the above lines from Wordsworth's great sonnet, composed upon the beach near Calais, and these:

> " Listen ! The mighty Being is awake
> And doth with his eternal motion make
> A sound like thunder—everlastingly."

It was not only a sound like thunder that Beethoven heard, but also a sound like tears, wrung from a soul bruised and almost broken by the strokes of circumstance, yet rising through its tears unbroken at the voice of reconciliation and of joy which fell like a voice from heaven on his strangely troubled heart. For one who wrestled

hard like Beethoven, and who listened long and late, it must have been a pang almost past endurance when the world of sweet sounds and pleasant voices gradually slipped beyond his range. Latterly, as it has often been told, no sound from a full orchestra could reach him even while he stood in the midst of it with his back to the audience. And he had to be turned round at the conclusion of one of his symphonies to see the enthusiasm which his music had aroused.

But the closing of the outer seemed only to expand the inner ear, and wonderfully it caught the strains of a new song. For amid the poignancy of his sufferings he never lost his sense of reverence for God, or his deep and tender devotion to all that was highest in man. Nor did his power of will forsake him, but rather grew with the breadth and depth of his insight, and with his noble courage till he, the lonely worker, stood forth as a supreme singer of the faith once delivered to the saints. There is, in truth, but one other name to be named along with his in the realm of music, the name of Bach—already mentioned in our first chapter. It is vain to compare the one

with the other. We owe them both so much more than can ever be told. At the same time there is a sound, as of conflict, in the music of Beethoven. He has been assailed now by doubt and now by despair, but has surmounted both, casting out fear. His faith has come out of great tribulation and bursts into an ode to Joy. And more even than that. For it has been truly suggested that the conflict which he had to face especially in his last years " deepened and sweetened the visionary and drew from him a series of meditations which are among the loveliest things in music and the most precious religious documents of the world."

" The effect on the heart of these last works is not so much ravishment as laceration, so interwoven are they with pain and forbearance and with strength mated to tenderness. His spirit now finds its perfect vehicle in the form of the string quartet. True, he is nowhere gayer than in some of these last movements ; but the very gaiety is heart-breaking, so remote is it, so ethereal, so exquisite in its concealment of renunciation. Beethoven, to whom our world had been so rude, so shattering, rebuilds its ruins into forms of

imperishable beauty ; and from his conquest springs his faith. For there is more in his last works than the co-ordination, the consecration, of the past. There is a mystical inquiry, a mystical hope. Taking the wings of beauty, he passes the gates of death, and, like the lark in the darkness before dawn, ventures upwards and onwards still singing as he searches for a more perfect day."*

* *The Times Literary Supplement,* March 24, 1927.

CHAPTER IX

CHRIST THE FIRST-FRUITS; AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S.

In the preceding chapter one has chosen only two or three supreme examples from the teeming world of Art to show that the fact of Jesus, or as the essence of that, His creative Spirit of grace and truth entered and possessed it no less than the world of Religion, and every world, indeed, of thought and action involved in human personality. It transformed these worlds and is still transforming them, for the process up till now is only half complete. The masters have done their part in helping on the process. It may have been observed that there is the same impassioned, the same creative freedom in Beethoven as in Leonardo, and in Rembrandt, the same independence of the past, each treating the past as a guide but never a chain, and the same commanding sense of the unity of beauty and reality. There

is no attempt to sever the kindred worlds of Art and Religion, united as they are by the one surpassing object or ideal. Art in them has been enriched and lifted up by the vision of the same Christ.

If one considers the works of the masters in different lands and at different times, meaning by the masters all those who have deeply felt, imagined, wrought into more or less finished form, one can see that Art and Religion more than ever, since the Christ appeared upon the earth, are meet as they are meant to walk and work together side by side, each bringing to the other its own inimitable gift. Surely that is why cathedrals, abbeys, shrines now in open and now in sequestered places have been and are constructed to embody and express the grace and truth, the beauty and reality which are necessary to the soul of man, and which it longs for in its life and worship. For man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Art is not opposed to Religion, nor is Religion opposed to Art, but both are members one of another, and both in their great

and vital periods have been enthralled by the grace, the charm, the loveliness, the divinity in fashion as a man of Jesus Christ, no less than by His truth. Unconsciously and consciously alike, Art has shown its own vivid sense of what the Christ has been and is and will be in the life and progress of mankind. It has gradually formed an image or idea of His Person as living and essential, and as worthy of the study of the scholar as that of any of the creeds.

But it cannot be denied that the Church, although it has often been at one with the masters in their vision of the blended truth and beauty of the Christ, and has often by its sympathy enabled them to work their vision into visible and audible reality, has yet too often failed to abide by the mutual ministry of Art and Religion, and has let them fly asunder with harm to both. Thus the Church has been content and is still content with plain, and unchaste, uncomely buildings, and with forms of worship which make but little or no appeal to the love and longing of man, so often deeper than he knows, for the Beautiful.

Aiming at simplicity the Church—one refers

here specially to the Reformed Church, has somehow failed to fill that simplicity with appropriate symbol, or even with fine and finished workmanship, and has reached only an emptiness quite devoid of spiritual uplift or significance. Simplicity does not mean emptiness but a certain richness in keeping with the great spiritual purpose of the Church. The building, as almost universally in Scotland, for example, is more like an ordinary hall than a holy place apart. It lacks the air of wonder, reverence, adoration, which one would fain associate with the courts of the Lord. Of course there are notable exceptions as in certain cathedrals, and abbeys, and a few other churches, mostly built before the need of reformation arose. But, considering that a living religion does exist in Scotland, one is surprised that it should so often have failed in its votaries and should still fail to enshrine itself in buildings symbolic of, and in harmony with the grace and truth of Christ.

If Art needs Religion, and Religion needs Art, and man needs them both, then, surely, the Church called after Christ ought to make room

for both and let them operate in the style of its buildings and the form of its worship. There can be nothing too beautiful wherewith to adorn the house of our God and His worship there, if it be in spirit and in truth. Beauty does not consist in mere decoration, or in excess of symbol as in churches that hold or think they hold severely by the past, but in such symbol, such ornament so finely thought and wrought as to make the meeting-place a sacred place, a sanctuary devoted both in little and in great to the service, and the search of the Divine. It would then be possible to say in fact and faith :

" How lovely is Thy dwelling-place,
O Lord of hosts, to me !
The tabernacles of Thy grace,
How pleasant, Lord, they be !
My thirsty soul longs veh'mently
Yea faints, Thy courts to see :
My very heart and flesh cry out,
O living God, for Thee."

The Church stands for the recognition and the consecration of the powers and abilities of the whole man made in the image of God, and having it in him to approach and possess that image as it was and is in Jesus Christ, the first-born

of every creature. There is no man who should not be able to feel at home in the Church, or that the Church is his own. The Church, of all the institutions that exist, exists pre-eminently for all men without respect of persons, so that the total life of each may be touched, awakened, caught up by the vision of its totality, of which beauty is as much a part as truth and goodness. If the total or full-grown man, the man whose measure is that of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. iv. 13) be the end of Religion, beauty must have its portion and its play within that end. It must work together with the other values towards its consummation.

Therefore the Church must keep the total end in view if it is to finish and fulfil its mission on the earth. It cannot pass over, or neglect as being of less or but little value, the ministry of beauty. Neither truth nor goodness, nor any other value that may be named, exists or functions in its wholeness without beauty. The Scriptures bear ample witness to a principle like this. Thus we are told that all that sat in the council looking stedfastly on Stephen, " saw his face as it had been

the face of an angel," the pure soul so irradiating eye and lip and look that the whole man became aglow with the light of the open heavens which he saw (Acts vi. 15; vii. 56). Similarly we are informed of Moses coming down from the Mount that the skin of his face shone and he wist not that it shone (Ex. xxxiv. 29); and of Jesus that "He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light" (Matt. xvii. 2).

One may recall, that in the apocryphal tale of the Acts of Paul and Thekla, it is related of a certain Onesiphorus that "hearing that Paul was intending to come to Iconium he went forth to meet him, and he stood and scanned the features of the passers-by. And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size with meeting eyebrows, bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man, and at times he had the face of an angel." Which shows that a spirit, an inner life charged with beauty may transform a plain uncomely face until it bears the same image without as within.

For beauty cannot conceal itself. It is so

breathed into the life of nature, and so becomes it that it must reveal itself in the landscape near and far, and in the "violet by a mossy stone," and in the microscopic markings and shadings that adorn an insect's wing. Ruskin has pointed out how irrepressible beauty is in nature so that the cleavages and rendings of the rocks have taken place under laws of fair curvature. "If instead of dew and sunshine the only instruments I am to use are the lightning and the frost, then their forked tongues and crystal wedges shall still work out my laws of tender line." So, the great mountains are fashioned by the same ordinances that direct the bending of the reed, and the blush of the rose.

Wordsworth, in one of his lyrical poems, tells of a child of whom Nature said :

> "This Child I to myself will take,
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A Lady of my own.
> The stars of midnight shall be dew
> To her ; and she shall lean her ear
> In many a secret place
> Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
> And beauty born of murmuring sound
> Shall pass into her face."

For if beauty is of the very life of nature and is shed abroad by it, beauty is no less of the moral or the spiritual life of man, and springs from it. When the moral or the spiritual life is as it ought to be, its inherent beauty passes, likewise, into the face, the feeling, the finished work of him who lives it. The beauty of it is as irrepressible as the beauty of nature. Beauty is the touch of the Divine upon the face of nature and the face of humanity alike. A beautiful thought or deed is as God would think it or do it : just as " He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."

And that is what Jesus meant when He said of the woman of Bethany, " it is a good or a beautiful thing she has done to Me " ; and added, " Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." It was a deed characteristic of the Gospel, born of the spirit of beauty which the Gospel imparts. What was this deed that won such wealth of praise ? A deed spontaneously done to Him when His

life was swiftly drawing to its close, and when His enemies were gathering their forces for their last attack. Even His own disciples were still unmoved by a devotion equal to the thinking out and the doing of so fine a deed. There was one woman, however, whose heart was full of wondering devotion. She had looked far and deep into the soul of Christ, and received into her own something of the fineness of His, of its beauty, its grace. It must have been a rare experience—the meeting of these twain just before the nightfall.

A tradition of the ancient world said that no change of form could hide a god from a god, and no appearance of humiliation, of loneliness, or of weakness could conceal from her the reality of Him she had come to adore. One can but imagine from afar what the insight and the sympathy of such a soul must have meant to Jesus in the crisis of His life. For He was not either so alone or so aloof as to be indifferent to the thought and help of others. "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" tells that He would fain have leaned upon the strength and

faithfulness of others in the hour of need. But what He lost or lacked in the garden He found in the splendour of this woman's help and homage. Her timely act was fraught with a deep understanding of His soul and of His sacrifice. She had even tasted, as one might say, of the same cup as His own.

In a picture to be seen in Bologna, an angel is represented standing at the foot of the empty Cross, and touching with his finger one of the sharp points in the crown of thorns, but he is all bewildered, not knowing what it means. But she with her prescience knew the meaning of the thorn. And her offering, spontaneous, irrepressible, benign, comforted and cheered His heart. There was the alabaster box broken at His feet, and the precious ointment pouring over His head—a token in these last and lonely days that He was not alone. And like a smile stealing over His face, or like a tear welling to His eyes, came His joyous answer from the depths : " it is a beautiful thing she has done to Me."

His appreciation of the " beautiful thing " recalls His appreciation of the lilies of the field.

Why did Jesus so admire and sing of them? Why did He tell men to "consider them." Surely, because they bore the handprints and the tints and tidings of the Divine thought and mastership, which if men would but behold and believe in, would deliver them from worldly care and anxiety of mind. And is there not a similar effusion of delight in the pure and generous action of the woman in Simon's house? It was full of the authentic spirit of the Gospel, it had its heavenly stamp upon it, it was complete, it was beautiful, and He approved it for all time as the kind of deed the Gospel inspires. It was a product of the Gospel, a flower or fruit by which the Gospel could be tested and known throughout the world. For two things are impossible when the spirit of Jesus possesses the heart of a man. It cannot be hid any more than the odour of the ointment that filled the house, and it cannot be other than beautiful in its effects. "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house."

" Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
Not light them for ourselves, for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not."

So, if the Gospel, if the spirit of Christ does not go forth of us 'twere all alike as if we had it not.

There was once a man who wrote in his last will : " I have lived and died a humble follower of the Lord Jesus. I have hitherto concealed this, because many men make gain by the profession." Suppose he concealed it in conversation, which is difficult to believe, he could certainly not conceal it in character and life. If the same mind that was in Christ was in him it could not but break into beauty in his motives and activities. It is the way of the Gospel, its divine necessity to reveal itself in works like that one of which the Highest Judge exclaimed, " It is a beautiful thing she has done to Me." It radiated, it reproduced its beauty. To the woman He was the King in His beauty, and naught but a beautiful thing could avail to express the utter devotion of her love.

Wherever His rule is the rule of a life or of a community of lives there can never be a whisper of waste. It is not waste to offer beautiful

churches in homage to Christ and in adoration of His Name. Our churches, far too often, are mean and unworthy of Christ and of His wondrous Cross. With but few exceptions they are not lovely in construction or design. They are not arrayed like "one of these." There is no beauty straining towards the ideal in their workmanship without or within. They do not cheer or charm the soul, or uplift it as if they were the uttermost that reverence and wonder could bestow. They are of the earth earthy rather than of the heaven heavenly. They fail to stand out as shrines dedicated both by gratitude and sheer amazement to the Christ of God.

It is time there were an end put to this severance of Art and Religion, time that beauty no less than duty were offered freely in and to the service of the Highest; time that wealthy individuals, and wealthy communities were to adorn their wealth and ennoble themselves by dedicating even a small portion of it to the building of beautiful churches throughout the length and breadth of the land. And the time is ripe.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in."

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